

Accountability Report Transmittal Form

Agency Name: **South Carolina Forestry Commission**

Date of Submission: **September 14, 2007**

Agency Director: **Bob Schowalter**

Agency Contact Person: **J. Charles Ramsey**

Agency Contact's Telephone Number: **803-896-7944**

South Carolina Forestry Commission
 Annual Accountability Report
 Fiscal Year 2006 – 2007

SECTION I – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. *Agency Mission and Values:*

The mission of the South Carolina Forestry Commission (SCFC) is to protect, promote, enhance, and nurture the woodlands of South Carolina, and to educate the public about forestry issues, in a manner consistent with achieving the greatest good for its citizens.

The SCFC values:

- Customer Service and Satisfaction
- Professionalism and Pride in Quality Work
- Honesty, Integrity and Treating Employees with Respect and Trust
- Employee Accountability
- Teamwork
- Open Communications

2. *Major achievements from past year:*

- **Strategic Plan** Implementation–The updated strategic plan was approved by the Commissioners in June 2006. Since then the focus has been on implementation. The Commissioners, State Forester, Deputy State Forester, and the executive team monitor existing initiatives on a quarterly basis and identify potential new initiatives for action. The initiatives are then translated into objectives and success criteria for respective program areas and employees.
- **Forest Resource Development** – During the 2007 fiscal year, the SCFC Resource Development Division represented the agency and forestry community through 10 statewide and regional economic development organizations. The SCFC actively participated in the SC Competitiveness Initiative representing the forestry-related clusters. In addition, the SCFC took the lead in a *Grow Some Green* tree planting campaign using radio advertisements, direct mail outs, and presentations at landowner meetings.
- **Incident Management Teams (IMT)** – During FY 2007 we established an Incident Management Team Coordinator. As a result, we have selected team members, issued task books and initiated training. The agency was designated by the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) to assist with the development of four multi-disciplinary IMTs located statewide. A state working group has been established to facilitate team consistency. In addition, Standard Operating Procedures have been completed and adopted for all teams. Applicable team equipment needs have been identified and items ordered..
- **Wildfire Prevention Teams** – Five Prevention Teams were formed to educate the public on safe burning practices. These teams visited over 300 locations/businesses in five counties. Wildfire prevention materials were delivered to schools where over 3,700 letters were distributed. A *How to Have a Firewise Home* workshop was conducted as well as presentations to other groups – homeowners, planning committees, and fire chiefs. Yard debris demonstrations and burn site inspections were conducted. Over 21,000 wildfire prevention products, such as door hangers, bracelets, notification magnets, cups, pencils, signs, and rain gauges, were distributed. The *Think Before You Burn* slogan was promoted

through the use of various printed materials such as brochures (English and Spanish), newsletters, newspaper inserts, billboards, posters and stickers.

- **Southern Pine Beetle Prevention Program** – The southern pine beetle, endemic to SC, builds to epidemic levels on a 5 to 10 year cycle. Since 1995, SC has suffered the two worst outbreaks on record, with losses exceeding a half-billion dollars. SCFC developed a southern pine beetle prevention program to reduce losses on privately owned woodlands, with a focus on implementation of practices to keep pine stands healthy. During the year 294 landowners have completed southern pine beetle prevention restoration practices on over 9,700 acres
- **Succession Planning/Professional Development** – TERI departures continue to create opportunities for realignment of job functions and selection of replacements prior to retirements. To enable a smoother transition replacements work directly with the retiring employees for several months.

A three-stage career ladder for Forestry Commission Dispatchers was developed by the Dispatch Coordinator and Regional Dispatch Managers and implemented in 2007. It allows Dispatchers to move from Dispatcher I to Dispatcher III by accumulating years of experience, completing courses in wildfire and prescribed fire management, assisting and then supervising and training new Dispatchers.

- **Employee Recognition** – Intentional efforts were made to improve employee recognition this past year. Luncheons were held around the state during the month of May, where possible, the luncheons were held during Public Service Recognition Week. The agency director hosted three additional luncheons to recognize various employee groups.

3. *Key strategic goals for present and future years:*

- Protect life, property, and the forest resource from the increasing threat of wildfire and other hazards as the population expands into forested areas. Continue the increased emphasis on the use of prescribed burning, as a means for reducing hazardous fuels, with the SC Prescribed Fire Council.
- Continue to train and qualify two overhead Incident Management Teams (IMTs).
- Maintain an effective, well-trained, well-equipped, and diverse workforce, while continuing to assess and realign in response to on-going retirements and the changing needs and desires of customers. Undertake steps to transition to a better paid firefighter workforce with firefighters reporting to an agency facility daily.
- Improve the effectiveness of internal communications, stressing individual employee roles in the implementation of the strategic plan.
- Raise awareness among the public and decision-makers of the economic, environmental, and social benefits of a well managed, healthy forest resource.
- Provide the basic data needed to assess the forest resource, its condition, and the potential for the development or expansion of sustainable markets for forest products and ecosystem services in support of SC's Competitiveness Initiative.
- Provide technical assistance to landowners, communities, and state agencies.

4. *Opportunities and barriers that may affect the agency's success in fulfilling its mission and achieving its strategic goals.*

Opportunities:

- Communities, especially those within the wildland-urban interface, need assistance with fire prevention and community wildfire protection plans.
- Increasing interest in the need for green space and the health and productivity of that space amplify the need to better educate people about the environmental, social, and economic benefits of a well-managed, healthy forest, and the role that prescribed fire plays.
- New and under-served forest landowners need technical forestry assistance.
- All of the above activities underscore the need to continuously collect and provide data to assess SC's forest resource and its condition.
- The State's increasing forest land holdings, if managed under SCFC state lands program, can demonstrate sustainable forestry that includes wildlife, water, recreation, and jobs.
- Increasing demands on the forest resource to provide clean water has increased opportunities to work with agencies, organizations, and industries in the promotion of and training in forestry best management practices.
- Vulnerable forest landowners (elderly, minority, and female) are frequent victims of timber fraud and timber theft, creating the need for highly specialized forest law enforcement.
- Homeland security issues and the utilization of multiple agencies in emergency or disaster situations create opportunities for the SCFC to share its expertise and train agencies in the Incident Command System, and to provide IMTs for emergency responses.
- Increasing need for alternative energy sources provides an opportunity for South Carolina to become a leader in promoting energy from forest biomass.

Barriers:

- Public demands for forestry services, including fire prevention and suppression, have increased as SCFC staffing and budgets have declined. Foresters and forest technician supervisors have increased areas of responsibility and increased geographical coverage.
- Past budget reductions, with increasing equipment costs have made it necessary to lengthen the replacement schedule for firefighting equipment. Rising operating costs, especially fuel prices, are increasing the cost of detecting and suppressing wildland fires. All of these decrease the agency's ability to keep pace with technological advances in equipment needed for mission critical functions. Loss of firefighter positions and funds to replace firefighting equipment on a safe and efficient replacement schedule have placed the agency's fire preparedness at a critical level. Should weather conditions create severe fire conditions for a prolonged duration, the agency's ability to respond to wildfires would be inadequate. Improvements in technology to provide communication necessary for emergency response is available, yet implementation of new technology lags due to budgetary limitations.
- Loss of experienced personnel through retirements, with more stringent employment requirements and mandated training for firefighters and dispatchers, coupled with very low starting salaries, make it difficult to hire and retain qualified personnel. The agency is faced with challenges of a rapidly retiring workforce; training and transfer of knowledge are a top priority. Salaries have not kept pace with increased responsibilities, nor with salaries in other organizations, making it difficult to recruit and retain qualified employees.

- The loss of cooperator (forest industry) firefighter capacity, due to the sale of forest industry lands and subsequent elimination of firefighting personnel and equipment, places greater demands on the agency's limited firefighting resources.
- County forestry boards' role in management of local personnel hampers the agency's ability to realign much of the workforce to meet current needs. This role, specified by law, needs to be changed.
- The state's changing demographic and population expansion into rural areas have contributed to the fragmentation of forest ownership, increased the risk of fire to homes, and created a large number of new forest landowners. Lacking a rural background, these landowners are unaware of basic management techniques needed to keep their woodlands healthy and productive. This is having an especially adverse impact on the use of prescribed fire in the state. Agency personnel must monitor proposed regulations at the state and local level to ensure that the ability to manage woodlands is retained.

5. *How the accountability report is used to improve organizational performance:*

The accountability report is utilized by the SCFC in developing budget requests, monitoring established performance measures, updating or establishing benchmarks, and documenting continuous improvement efforts. Many performance measures are tied directly to the agency's strategic plan and implementation/status of goals and action items in the plan. Specific goals and action items are incorporated into employees' performance planning stages.

SECTION II – ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

1. Main products and services and the primary methods by which these are delivered:

Protect the Resource

The SCFC has a statewide wildfire prevention, detection and control network in place. According to the South Carolina Code of Laws, "It shall take and afford such organized means as may be necessary to prevent, control and extinguish fires, including the enforcement of any and all laws pertaining to the protection of the forests and woodlands in the State."

Through a grant from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED), an Incident Management Team (IMT) Coordinator position was created. The IMT Coordinator works with fire and training staff to facilitate the development of a nationally-qualified Type 2 IMT from within the Forestry Commission, a Type 3 IMT within the Forestry Commission, and to ensure consistency among four multi-disciplinary Type 3 IMTs located statewide. These teams are being developed to increase the capability of the state to manage wildfires, natural disasters, or other major events that may occur. Once trained, the Type 2 team will be able to respond within the state, region or nation as needed. This year, training standards were determined, standard operating guidelines were written, and equipment needs were identified for the teams.

SCFC personnel construct firebreaks on privately owned woodlands to suppress fires and reduce the potential for destructive wildfire. To further minimize the effect of wildfire and smoke hazards, SCFC foresters prepare prescribed burning plans for property owners and assist with conducting burns to reduce hazardous fuels, improve wildlife habitat, and prepare sites for reforestation.

The SCFC, with funding from the National Fire Plan, has designated 108 communities at extreme to high risk of wildfire as a result of wildfire risk assessments. Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) are being developed and distributed to the fire chiefs and homeowner association presidents where available. These plans provide homeowners, community planners, Fire Departments, and SCFC wildland firefighters with an outline of the mitigation actions to implement in order to reduce the wildfire hazard. A community that takes actions to reduce the risk of wildfire becomes eligible to receive national recognition as a "Firewise Community USA". Planning of homeowner and community leader education workshops is on-going throughout South Carolina. Eighteen workshops were held last year with total attendance of over 490. Additional Firewise presentations were made at various conferences, including the Nursery and Landscape Association. Cooperative efforts with Clemson Extension Service were made to promote Firewise with neighboring communities around the Sand Hills Research and Education Center. Presentations were made to homeowner's associations to encourage firewise developments. SCFC personnel manned Firewise exhibits at the SC Horticulture Expo and the SC Firemen's Convention. Coordinators in each administrative region of the state ensure that homeowners, planners, and developers receive technical assistance and information regarding methods to reduce the risk of wildfires in their communities. The SCFC joined in a collaborative effort with the USDA Forest Service, USDI Fish & Wildlife Service, and the USDI National Park Service to fund and develop a Firewise Mobile Exhibit to be used in various venues to inform the public about Firewise principles.

The SCFC periodically surveys the state for forest insect and disease infestations. The headquarters office houses an entomologist and pathologist working from a fully equipped diagnostic lab. This provides agency foresters and landowners access to up-to-date information and diagnosis of specific problems and recommendations for control. The SCFC has also

instituted a Southern Pine Beetle Prevention Program to provide advice to landowners in minimizing future SPB damage and a cost-share program to aid landowners in areas impacted by the beetle. This program utilizes federal grant funding and requires no additional state funds.

The Law Enforcement Program strives to reduce woods arson and forest product theft and fraud. The program reinforces fire prevention efforts through the enforcement of state fire laws. During FY 07, the agency had 36 commissioned officers, including 5 full-time investigators.

Extended investigation of wildfires, especially arson related, was emphasized during the year, but we had a reduction in the number of fire-related prosecutions. (Graph 7.1-6) Although the number of timber theft/fraud cases increased this year, due to sustained, aggressive enforcement of timber transaction laws, the value of each case has drastically reduced. (Graph 7.1-5) The SCFC's Law Enforcement Program serves as a benchmark for our neighboring states, which currently do not actively investigate timber theft cases.

The SCFC is the designated agency in South Carolina to provide public oversight and guidance for technical forest management practices. The agency has established approved Best Management Practices (BMPs) and routinely monitors compliance with BMP guidelines. BMP Foresters, located in each of the three operating regions of South Carolina, offer courtesy BMP exams to landowners, foresters, and timber buyers. The BMP Forester makes site specific BMP recommendations to follow while conducting forestry activities. During FY 07, the BMP Foresters provided assistance on 644 sites, completed 430 courtesy exams and provided 3,830 contact hours of training for landowners, loggers and forestry professionals to increase awareness and implementation of BMPs. Compliance with BMPs related to timber harvesting was 98% for 2004-2005. A new monitoring survey was initiated for 2007-2008.

Manage the Resource

SCFC foresters, working throughout the state, examine woodlands at the request of landowners, with an emphasis on assisting new landowners and landowners that previously have not utilized the assistance of a professional forester. According to the South Carolina Code of Laws, "It shall give such advice, assistance and cooperation as may be practical to private owners of land ..."

SCFC foresters write woodland management plans tailored to the specific needs of each property. A plan includes descriptions of each forest stand, recommended practices to meet the objectives of the landowner, and a property map. The plan also includes suggestions on how to accomplish recommended work.

Prescribed burning services and timber marking services are offered for a fee.

There are several financial assistance options available to help landowners complete forestry improvement projects. SCFC foresters determine whether or not a landowner qualifies for assistance and then help with the application process and implementation of forestry practices.

To assist the state's woodland owners with reforestation, the Commission sells bareroot and containerized seedlings. Native pine and hardwood species are available. The SCFC nursery program operates on the receipts from seedling, cone, and seed sales.

The SCFC manages Sand Hills, Manchester, Harbison, Poe Creek and Wee Tee State Forests on a self-supporting basis for sustainable, multiple-use forestry and public education purposes.

All employees of the SCFC are committed to forest conservation education. Civic and social groups, scouts, science teachers and environmental organizations request programs on forestry and related environmental subjects.

As our urban areas expand, the importance of growing and maintaining healthy trees in city spaces will increase. Foresters work with urban residents, city planners, developers, contractors and local government to improve the quality of our urban environments.

Raise Awareness about the Resource

The SCFC is responsible for educating the public in the economic and environmental benefits of a well-managed forest resource. According to the South Carolina Code of Laws “It shall ... promote... a proper appreciation by the public of the advantages of forestry and the benefits to be derived from forest culture and preservation.”

The Commission's forestry education program's funding and staff diminished every year during four years of budget cuts. However, other SCFC employees continue to support the agency's popular Wood Magic Forest Fair and Teachers Tour programs. (Graph 7.1-9a and 7.1-10) Information and Education staff produce technical and informational materials (including the SCFC website) to explain forestry programs and educate various publics about the benefits of forestry.

2. *Key Customers and their key requirements/expectations:*

Owners and users of forestland

Requirements/expectations: protect their woodlands; help manage forests by providing professional assistance; enhance the forest resources to help insure that state's forest industry remains financially healthy.

Other State Agencies (who own woodlands)

Requirements/expectations: protect their woodlands, help manage forests by providing professional assistance, and assist them in being good stewards of the public lands for which they are responsible.

S.C. Law Enforcement Division/S.C. Emergency Management Division

Requirements/expectations: enhance state capability to respond to catastrophic events by developing all-hazard incident management teams; provide incident command system training to other agencies to ensure that natural and man-made disasters are managed effectively.

City and county fire and emergency services

Requirements/expectations: partner with them in wildland/interface fire control; raise the awareness regarding the challenges facing this state with wildland fires, especially the fires occurring in wildland urban interface areas.

Rural-Urban interface residents and interest groups

Requirements/expectations: protect their lives and property from wildland fire; raise the awareness regarding the challenges facing this state from wildland fires; enhance the forest resource to provide better stewardship of all the state's natural resources.

Forest industry

Requirements/expectations: protect their woodlands; provide management assistance to private forest owners to help insure wood supplies; enhance the resource to help insure future wood supplies and a strong forest industry within the state; help prepare to meet the future needs that will be placed on our forest resources.

State forests visitors and user groups

Requirements/expectations: protect the state owned woodlands, provide management to meet their recreational needs; enhance our state forests by being good stewards of the land; raise awareness about the importance and benefits of our state forests.

Urban residents and businesses

Requirements/expectations: provide management assistance with the urban forests located in the towns and cities of this state; assist in the protection of our urban forests from insect, disease and fire threats; raise awareness about the importance of our urban forest.

Earth science teachers and students

Requirements/expectations: help raise the awareness about SC forest resources by providing educational training, resources, and opportunities to teachers and students.

3. Key Stakeholders (other than customers):

- Employees
- Commissioners
- County Forestry Boards
- Local governments: county and city councils
- State Legislative members
- State of South Carolina

4. Key suppliers and partners:

Suppliers: Vehicle equipment manufacturers, heavy equipment manufacturers and dealers, federal excess property inventory system, vehicle repair garages and parts suppliers, communication equipment dealers and repair businesses, forestry equipment suppliers, office supply vendors, printing businesses and media outlets, and aerial detection contractors

Partners: State and Federal Agencies such as DHEC, SCEMD, DNR-State Climatology Office, US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Corps of Engineers, Department of Defense, National Weather Service, and US Environmental Protection Agency

5. Operation locations:

Personnel are assigned positions throughout the state through a series of zone, unit, regional, and headquarter offices. The largest single group of employees, forest fire wardens, reports directly from their residences in responding to wildland fires. Regional administrative and support offices are located in Newberry, Florence, and Walterboro. Central emergency dispatch centers are co-located at the regional office sites. A forest seedling nursery is located in Edgefield County, and a forest seed orchard is located in Jasper County. Major property holdings include Manchester State Forest in Sumter County, Sand Hills State Forest in Chesterfield and Darlington Counties, Harbison State Forest in Richland County, Poe Creek State Forest in Pickens County, and Wee Tee State Forest in Williamsburg County.

6. Number of employees segmented by employee category:

The SCFC has a total of 367 employees. Two of these positions are unclassified.

7. Regulatory environment:

SCFC Operations are authorized by the South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 48-23-10 to Section 48-23-295.

The major products and services of the SCFC are authorized and required by the South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 48-23-90, *General Duties of Commission* as stated below:

The Commission shall inquire into and make an annual report to the General Assembly upon the forest conditions in the State, with reference to the preservation of forests, the effect of the destruction of forests upon the general welfare of the State and other matters pertaining to the subject of forestry and tree growth, including recommendations to the public generally as to reforestation.

It shall take such action and afford such organized means as may be necessary to prevent, control and extinguish fires, including the enforcement of any and all laws pertaining to the protection of the forests and woodlands of the State.

It shall give such advice, assistance and cooperation as may be practical to private owners of land and promote, so far as it may be able, a proper appreciation by the public of the advantages of forestry and the benefits to be derived from forest culture and preservation.

It shall cooperate with the Federal Government in the distribution of funds allotted to the State for forestry purposes and shall assist in the enforcement of all laws pertaining thereto. It shall have the control of the expenditure of all funds received by it.

8. *Key strategic challenges:*

- **Protect the Resource** – To ensure their future health, South Carolina’s forests must be protected from harm due to natural and human-caused factors.
- **Raise Awareness about the Resource** – The SCFC must raise awareness among decision-makers and the public in general concerning the environmental, social, and economic benefits of sound forest management.
- **Manage the Resource** – Forest landowners, communities, and the public expect the SCFC to deliver financial and technical assistance while addressing social and environmental concerns.
- **Enhance the Resource** – An ample, productive forestland base and an economic climate conducive to forestry-based business are essential if forest landowners of South Carolina are to practice sustainable forest management.
- **Prepare to Meet Future Demands** – To meet future demands and provide quality customer service, the SCFC must have a well-trained, qualified staff that enjoys a safe and rewarding work environment.

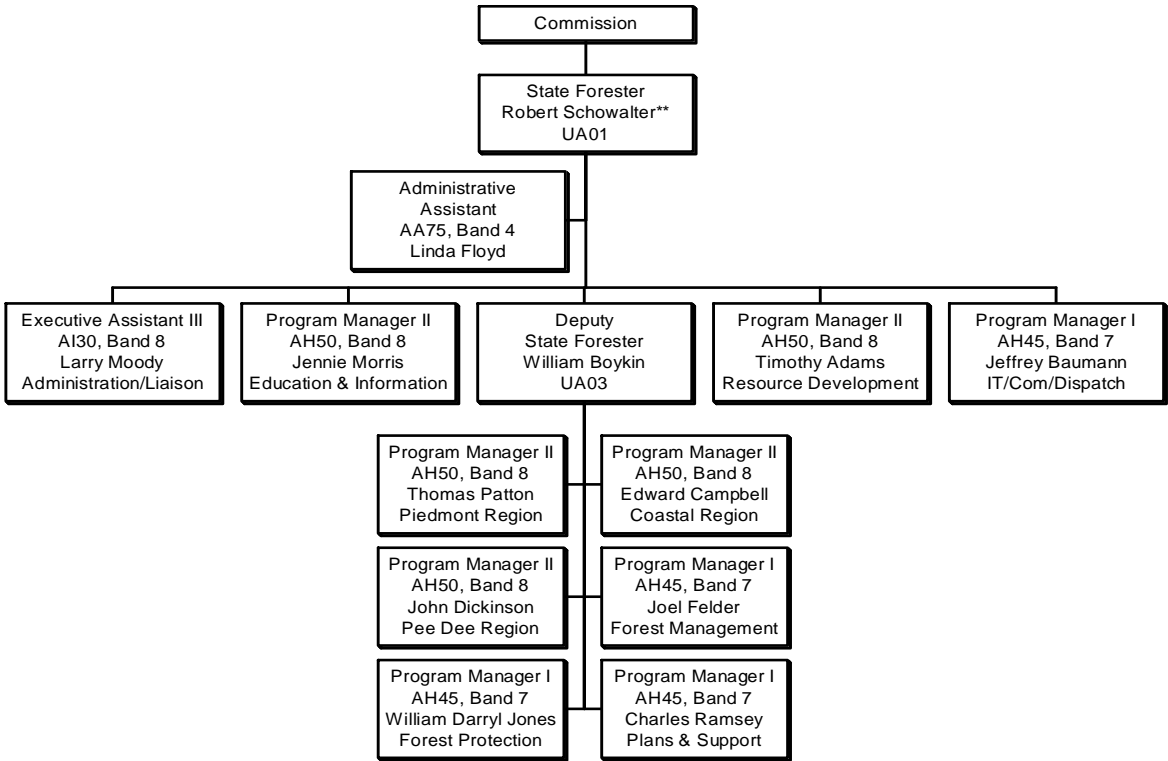
9. *Performance improvement systems:*

The accountability report is utilized by the SCFC in developing budget requests, monitoring established performance measures, updating or establishing benchmarks, and documenting continuous improvement efforts. Many performance measures are tied directly to the agency’s strategic plan and implementation/status of many goals and action items in the plan.

Performance expectations are determined through one or more of the following: review of past organizational performance, review of other organizations’ performance, input from employees primarily responsible for carrying out and monitoring the program, and feedback from customers. The results of the review and input are assessed and evaluated to ensure the current needs of the customers are met. Performance expectations may be modified based on the information. The agency has established and continues to build on the Plans and Support Department, which has the responsibility for monitoring and reporting on progress toward strategic goals and objectives.

Performance expectations are deployed and communicated through the strategic and action plans, the performance review planning process, and follow-up meetings/discussions. Commitment and performance are achieved and supported through periodic and on-going reviews of expectations and progress. Specific goals and action items are incorporated into employees' performance planning stages.

10 **Organizational Structure Chart:**
South Carolina Forestry Commission
Organizational Chart



11. Expenditure/Appropriations Chart**Accountability Report Appropriations/Expenditures Chart****Base Budget Expenditures and Appropriations**

Major Budget Categories	FY 05-06 Actual Expenditures		FY 06-07 Actual Expenditures		FY 07-08 Appropriations Act	
	Total Funds	General Funds	Total Funds	General Funds	Total Funds	General Funds
Personal Service	\$11,778,079	\$8,420,129	\$11,584,578	\$9,217,588	\$13,062,167	\$10,038,029
Other Operating	\$6,627,503	\$2,409,143	\$6,331,482	\$2,748,468	\$9,137,171	\$3,682,859
Special Items	\$809,417	\$200,000	\$757,887	\$200,000	\$1,000,000	\$200,000
Permanent Improvements	\$235,484	\$235,484	\$292,904	\$268,290	\$0	\$0
Case Services						
Distributions to Subdivisions	\$1,186,653		\$1,748,698		\$1,742,000	\$0
Fringe Benefits	\$4,052,648	\$3,013,875	\$4,327,661	\$3,527,168	\$4,634,256	\$3,607,045
Non-recurring	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000		
Total	\$24,839,784	\$14,428,631	\$26,043,210	\$16,961,514	\$29,575,594	\$17,527,933

Other Expenditures

Sources of Funds	FY 05-06 Actual Expenditures	FY 06-07 Actual Expenditures
Supplemental Bills	\$0	\$0
Capital Reserve Funds	\$0	\$0
Bonds	\$0	\$0

4. Major Program Areas Chart:

Major Program Areas

Program Number and Title	Major Program Area Purpose (Brief)	FY 05-06 Budget Expenditures	FY 06-07 Budget Expenditures	Key Cross Reference for Financial Results*
II Forest Landowners Assistance	<u>Forest Protection</u> To ensure their future health, South Carolina's forests must be protected from harm to include fire, disease, pests and other natural and human-caused factors.	State: 11,655,753 Federal: 3,894,584 Other: 285,598 Total: 15,835,935 % of Total Budget: 64%	State: 12,805,044 Federal: 2,890,128 Other: 424,041 Total: 16,119,213 % of Total Budget: 62%	7.3-1 7.3-2
II Forest Landowners Assistance	<u>Forest Management</u> The SCFC delivers financial and technical assistance to forest landowners, communities and the public while addressing social and environmental concerns.	State: 1,168,034 Federal: 1,066,116 Other: 843,507 Total: 3,077,657 % of Total Budget: 12%	State: 1,687,364 Federal: 1,252,482 Other: 901,301 Total: 3,841,147 % of Total Budget: 15%	7.3-1 7.3-2
III State Forests	<u>State Forests</u> Management, development and protection of timber, wildlife and endangered species and other resources. An ample productive forestland base and an economic climate conducive to forestry based business are essential if forest landowners of South Carolina are to practice sustainable forest management.	State: 150,000 Federal: 1,361 Other: 2,672,357 Total: 2,823,718 % of Total Budget: 11%	State: 0 Federal: 411 Other: 2,679,807 Total: 2,680,218 % of Total Budget: 10%	7.3-1 7.3-2

Below: List any programs not included above and show the remainder of expenditures by source of funds.

Remainder of Expenditures	State: 1,454,844	State: 2,469,105
Resource Development	Federal: 597,902	Federal: 491,407
Best Management Practices	Other: 1,049,730	Other: 442,118
Nurseries and Tree Improvement	Total: 3,102,476	Total: 3,402,630
Forest Information & Outreach	% of Total Budget: 12%	% of Total Budget: 13%
Administration		

*Key Cross-References are a link to the Category 7 – Business Results. These References provide a Chart number that is included in the 7th section of this document.

SECTION III – ELEMENTS OF THE MALCOLM BALDRIGE CRITERIA

CATEGORY I - LEADERSHIP

1.1 How do senior leaders set, deploy and ensure two-way communication for:

1.1a Short and long term direction and organizational priorities?

Senior leaders (agency director, his staff, and division directors), met with Commissioners, employees, stakeholders, and customers, during the year to discuss and review direction and priorities. The strategic plan serves as the primary guide for short and long term direction and priorities for the present through the next three to five years. Additionally, agency leadership and staff monitor for new issues that may arise in the Executive & Legislative branches of state government, the federal government, as well as within the forestry community across the state, the region and the nation. The agency director and a number of program managers and employees serve on local, state, regional, and/or national forestry related committees.

Deployment and communication are accomplished through the agency's weekly news bulletins and various meetings with employees, customers, and stakeholders. Selected action items are included in employee performance evaluation planning stages.

1.1b Performance expectations?

Performance expectations are determined through one or more of the following: internal review of past performance, review of other organizations' performances, input from employees responsible for programs, feedback from customers, audits, program reviews by the USDA Forest Service.

Performance expectations are deployed and communicated through the strategic and action plans, the performance planning stage and review process, monthly staff meetings and discussions with personnel. Commitment and performance are achieved and supported through periodic and on-going reviews of expectations and progress with employees.

1.1c Organizational values?

Agency leadership adopted organizational values as identified by employees at an agency-wide planning conference and strives to model these values during regular interaction with employees.

1.1d Empowerment and innovation?

Agency leadership works to strengthen and broaden efforts toward empowerment and innovation through employees participation on various committees related to safety, training, equipment selection, and WUI steering committee. Program staff are also encouraged to identify opportunities and barriers relevant to accomplishing agency or program goals and recommend appropriate actions within policy and budget.

1.1e Organizational and employee learning?

Organizational and employee learning is primarily set, deployed, and communicated through program managers and an established training council which consists of a cross-section of employees. Leadership actively supports the efforts of the training council in identifying, evaluating, prioritizing, and implementing internal training. A cross-section of employees from multiple programs was recruited for assignment on the agencies all-risk Incident Management Teams. The agency continued its commitment to employee participation in the Certified Public Manager program. Transfer of knowledge continues to be a critical issue with TERI and other retirements. Succession planning strategies continue to be utilized in filling positions vacated due to retirements.

1.1f *Ethical behavior?*

Agency leadership sets, deploys, and communicates ethical expectations through the agency's values, individual discussions, policies and procedures, and employee participation in professional organizations. Employees violating ethical principles are dealt with through appropriate individual means.

1.2 *How do senior leaders establish and promote a focus on customers and other stakeholders?*

Agency leaders periodically meet with customers and stakeholders to discuss agency, customer and stakeholder priorities and needs..

Customer feedback and input on forestry services and issues such as seedling sales, services work, technical forest management assistance, and notification of wildfires are solicited through surveys, and focus groups. Recreational users of state forests participate in advisory councils.

1.3 *How does the organization address the current and potential impact on the public of its products, programs, services, facilities and operations, including associated risks?*

Current and potential impacts and risks are identified by seeking Commissioner, employee, customer, public, and partner input/feedback.

Impacts and risks are addressed through review by program managers, agency leaders and Commissioners, as well as through legal, financial, and insurance consultations.

1.4 *How do senior leaders maintain fiscal, legal, and regulatory accountability?*

Fiscal, legal and regulatory accountability are maintained through the use of policies, procedures, and internal and external controls. Controls are in place to maintain a separation of duties in the fiscal area. This, along with the use of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), insures fiscal responsibility and eliminates opportunity for fraud. Monthly reviews of budget status in relation to appropriations and adherence to the State Procurement Code sustain legal accountability. Use of the State Attorney General's Office and private attorneys to deal with Human Resource complaints, lawsuits or other legal and regulatory issues insures accountability. The State Auditor's Office and the USDA Forest Service regularly conduct audits and reviews to insure compliance with State and Federal laws, rules and regulations.

1.5 *What key performance measures are regularly reviewed by your senior leaders?*

Customer satisfaction levels for forest tree seedlings, forestry assistance, and services (Graphs 7.2-1; 7.2-2; 7.2-3)

- Forest based economic development impact (Graph 7.1-1a&b)
- Forest Inventory Analysis Productivity (Graph 7.1-2)
- Fire response times & Southern states average fire sizes (Graphs 7.1-3; 7.1-4)
- Timber theft recovery rates (Graph 7.1-5)
- Law Enforcement Investigations/Prosecutions (Graph 7.1-6)
- Best management practices compliance trends (Graph 7.1-7)
- Southern Pine Beetle losses (Graphs 7.1-8)
- Raise the Awareness About the Resource (Graph 7.1-9a&b & 7.1-10)
- Financial (Graphs 7.3-1 through 7.3-9)
- Employee turnover rates/ satisfaction (Graphs 7.4-1)
- Health and Safety (Graph 7.4-2)

1.6 How do senior leaders use organizational performance review findings and employee feedback to improve their own leadership effectiveness and the effectiveness of management throughout the organization? How do their personal actions reflect a commitment to the organizational values?

Senior leaders discuss and use employee feedback and organizational reviews to determine if leadership/management:

- adequately communicates direction and priorities to employees
- identifies and removes barriers that may hinder employees' performance
- sets realistic performance expectations
- should modify or change priorities

Agency leadership maintains an open door approach to business with employees, customers, and stakeholders, participates in the physical fitness work capacity tests with employees, and continues to support additional employee recognition efforts.

1.7 How do senior leaders promote and personally participate in succession planning and the development of future organizational leaders?

The agency director conducts meetings with senior leadership to devise and implement strategies for succession planning and to identify opportunities for developing future leaders. Leadership continues to review and discuss the status of these efforts and identify additional needs/opportunities on a regular basis.

1.8 How do senior leaders create an environment for performance improvement, accomplishment of strategic objectives, and innovation?

Input for update of the strategic plan was sought from employees at all levels of the organization. Major goals and objectives and their status are discussed at staff meetings and input for performance improvement and innovation is encouraged through various employee councils and program personnel. Committees are charged with identifying opportunities for improvement.

1.9 How does senior leadership actively support and strengthen the communities in which your organization operates? Include how senior leaders and employees contribute to improving those communities.

The agency supports local school districts in which state forests are located by returning 25% of the gross receipts generated from the sale of forest products on each forest to the district. Leadership and the agency also strengthen communities by supporting employee participation in professional and community organizations and associations, and by encouraging employees to monitor issues related to forestry at the local level. SCFC employees routinely provide advice and assistance, as well as training and grant opportunities to communities, organizations, and local governments, especially through the agency's Urban and Community Forestry program, cooperation with rural and volunteer fire departments, and reforestation efforts. Employees' involvement includes participation in and support of local fire, law enforcement, and forestry associations; participation in the United Way, Red Cross & Blood Connection blood drives, various walk & bike-a-thons, Good Health Appeal, Special Olympics, Palmetto Pride, fishing rodeos for youth, state forests and state park events, as well as festivals in towns, cities, and communities.

CATEGORY 2 - STRATEGIC PLANNING

2.1 *What is your Strategic Planning process, including KEY participants, KEY process steps, and how does it address:*

The agency's strategic plan is the basis for short term, mid term and long term planning. Over the last 10 years the agency's strategic plan has been revised three times with the most recent revision being completed in June 2006. The revision process took place over several months involving the collection of input and data from agency Commissioners, employees, customers, cooperators, and the public. Information/data was analyzed and its content verified, like issues consolidated, strategies identified, the plan developed and disseminated, with reviews and monitoring occurring as the plan is carried out.

2.1a *Organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats:*

Through the SWOT portion of the strategic plan process we continue to keep focused on our customers and stakeholders. Doing this helps us to identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats that could impact our goals and actions.

2.1b *Financial, regulatory, societal and other potential risks:*

Specific financial, societal, or other risks are addressed in individual action items in the strategic plan. This includes reviewing the agency's financial and staffing levels and needs.

2.1c *Shifts in technology or the regulatory environment:*

The SCFC evaluates staffing, equipment, and technology to ensure adequate response to all wildfires, forest health issues, and other activities and events within the scope of the SCFC's mission.

2.1d *Human resource capabilities and needs:*

The strategic plan reflects the agency's intent to plan effectively for the use of human resources, with a strong emphasis on training and safety for firefighters and foresters. In response to ongoing budget concerns and to initiate systematic planning for vacancies created by retirement, the SCFC reviewed its structure, programs, and staffing levels, and reorganized and realigned the workforce. Efforts continue to develop a stronger cross-functional workforce in the performance of forest protection and management services through the development of Incident Management Teams and Emergency Response Teams. Succession planning strategies continue to be utilized to minimize knowledge loss through attrition.

2.1e *The opportunities and barriers you described in the Executive Summary. (question 4)*

The opportunities and barriers are addressed throughout the agency's strategic plan objectives, goals, and action statements.

2.1f *Business continuity in emergencies.*

The SCFC is a primary point of contact for 9-1-1 centers, fire departments and the public. SCFC statewide dispatch operations will be kept current with technology, equipment, and staffing to support the agency's fire dispatch, smoke management and emergency communications roles. There is an increased emphasis on training SCFC personnel and cooperators in the Incident Command System (ICS) and general wildfire suppression tactics. An agency Continuity of Operations Plan(COOP) has been developed in an effort to ensure continuity of essential functions in the event of a disaster. Part of this framework is based on the Southern Group of State Foresters Disaster Response Handbook. The agency cooperates with Emergency Management Division, fire departments, and other emergency response organizations. The SCFC seeks out opportunities to train and utilize private and/or non-traditional cooperators.

2.1g *Your ability to execute the strategic plan.*

Our efforts have been focused on linking employees' position descriptions and evaluations to the strategic plan. This enables us to provide for an effective way to execute our strategic plan as well as conform to the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria. Targeted goals and action items have been selected as performance objectives for employees in the line organization.

2.2 *How do you develop and track action plans that address your key strategic objectives, and how do you allocate resources to ensure the accomplishments of the plans?*

Action items are identified for each goal in the strategic plan and are included in the plan. Agency leaders and program managers further identified steps needed to achieve the action items and the personnel involved. These action items have been included in specific employees' EPMS planning stages, with managers and supervisors responsible for tracking progress. The action items are tied to performance measures. In addition, the Plans and Support Department is dedicated to monitoring and reporting on progress toward strategic goals and objectives.

2.3 *How do you communicate and deploy your strategic objectives, action plans and related performance measures?*

The agency's strategic plan is published on the SCFC website (see address below). All managers review and update strategic plan action items each year when performance appraisals are due. Employees are reminded of objectives, review performance measures, and discuss new action plans to improve performance measures with supervisors at that time. There is an effort underway to insure that all employees are aware of the progress being made on performance measures on a monthly and quarterly basis.

2.4 *How do you measure progress on your action plans?*

Since the action items are used to determine the agency's goals and are incorporated into our daily activities, the measure of them is reflected in the measures which have been developed for this accountability report. Graph 7.1-7, which measures compliance with BMPs, relates directly to *Protect the Resource – Goal Five – Action Item 5* in our strategic plan which states: "Continue BMP monitoring to document success and provide opportunities for education of landowners, loggers, and forestry professionals."

Accomplishments on action plans are tracked each month and compiled into a quarterly report which is presented to the executive staff and the Commissioners at each scheduled Commission meeting.

2.5 *How do your strategic objectives address the strategic challenges you identified in your Organizational Profile?*

Since the agency's strategic plan delineates our challenges, goals and actions, we have consciously developed our strategic objectives to meet the issues identified in our strategic plan.

2.6 *How do you evaluate and improve your strategic planning process?*

The Commissioners, State Forester, Deputy State Forester, and the executive team monitor existing initiatives on a quarterly basis and identify potential new initiatives for action. The initiatives are then translated into objectives and success criteria for respective program areas and employees.

2.7 If the agency's strategic plan is available to the public through the agency's Internet homepage, please provide an address for that plan on the website.

The web address for the agency's strategic plan is www.state.sc.us/forest/stratplan.htm.

2.8 *Strategic Planning Chart:***Strategic Planning**

Program Number and Title	Supported Agency Strategic Planning Goal/Objective	Related FY 06-07 Key Agency Action Plan/Initiative(s)	Key Cross References for Performance Measures*
II Forest Landowners Assistance Protection	Protect the resource	Ensure prompt and effective response to wildfire and other natural disasters Re-evaluate protection strategies, priorities, capabilities as urban areas expand into woodlands Lead in law enforcement in wildfire and timber theft and fraud investigation Ensure prompt response to insect and disease outbreaks Enhance water quality protection	7.1-3, 7.1-4, 7.3-7 7.1-5, 7.1-6 7.1-8 7.1-7
II Forest Landowners Assistance Forest Mgt. IV Education	Raise awareness about the resource	Develop and promote forestry education programs for all audiences Enhance the image of SCFC as source for forest management information and assistance	7.1-9a, 7.1-9b, 7.1-10
II Forest Landowners Assistance Forest Mgt. III State Forests IV Education	Manage the resource	Provide improved land management services to all SC landowners Provide technical, financial educational assistance in urban forestry Use landholdings to demonstrate management techniques	7.2-2, 7.2-3, 7.5-1 7.1-11
II Forest Landowners Assistance Forest Mgt. III State Forests IV Education	Enhance the Resource	Serve as catalyst for promotion, development, expansion of forest resource and markets in SC Provide timely information on forest inventory and health Provide landowners with optimum quality seedlings	7.1-1a, 7.1-1b 7.1-2 7.2-1
I Admin. II Forest Landowners Assistance Forest Mgt. III State Forests IV Education	Prepare to meet future demands	Maintain a capable, satisfied, diverse work team Enhance professional development for all agency staff Review staffing levels and organizational structure to ensure continued forestry services Reduce job-related injuries	7.4-1 7.4-2

*Key Cross-References are a link to the Category 7 – Results. These References provide a Chart number that is included in the 7th section of this document.

CATEGORY 3 – CUSTOMER FOCUS

3.1 How do you determine who your customers are and what are their key requirements?

Our key customers were generally identified in the South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 48-23-90 *General Duties of Commission*. As our services and products have evolved over the years our customer base has expanded to include other non-traditional forestry customers. For example, urban populations have expanded into the more rural and forested areas of our state and we are responding to this population's need for assistance on their personal property, as well as providing information on their surrounding natural environment.

Our agency uses a variety of methods to determine requirements, expectations, preferences and satisfaction of customers and stakeholders:

- Customer Surveys
- Focus Groups
- Public Forums and Workshops
- Collaboration with Partners and User Groups
- Outreach Publications for Targeted Audiences
- Interviews
- County Forestry Board Meetings
- Monitoring of Legislative Activities
- Homeowner Association Meetings
- Forest Landowner Association Meetings

The SCFC has conducted surveys of customers to determine their expectations and preferences. Survey forms soliciting feedback are sent to landowners that receive forest management assistance or services. Customers are asked about the length of time it took to complete the service, the results of the service, follow-up on the service, and courtesy and professionalism of the employees.

Each year, agency leadership also participates in meetings of county forestry boards to discuss current forestry issues and agency programs.

Federal grants dictate to whom we provide assistance in Community Forestry, Best Management Practices, and the Wildland/Urban Interface programs.

Periodic mailings, such as surveys to new forest landowners, help the agency acquire new customers and determine their interests and needs.

3.2 How do you keep your listening and learning methods current with changing customer/business needs and expectations?

The SCFC seeks input and information through customer surveys and employee feedback, as well as through participation in a number of partnerships and councils, to determine changing customer/business needs and expectations. These include: SC State Government Improvement Network, Urban and Community Forestry Council, SC Statewide Outreach Council, Wildland Fire Protection Partnership, the Prescribed Fire Council, South Carolina Foresters Council, Southern Group of State Foresters, National Association of State Foresters, Emergency Management Division, South Carolina Forestry Association, many local landowner associations, professional organizations, Firewise Community Homeowner Associations and the South Carolina Firemen's Association.

3.3 *How do you use information from customers/stakeholders to keep services or programs relevant and provide for continuous improvement?*

Information about customer satisfaction and suggestions for improving services are reviewed by the senior leadership of the SCFC and disseminated to the appropriate program manager or field supervisor to implement improvements to the service or product.

3.4 *How do you measure customer/stakeholder satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and use this information to improve?*

Customer satisfaction surveys regarding forest management plans, forest services, and forest tree seedlings are provided to customers to fill out and return in self-addressed postage paid envelopes. Survey information since 1998 is available for forest seedling customers (Graph 7.2-1); since 1999 for services (Graph 7.2-2) and management plans (Graph 7.2-3). Results from these surveys are reviewed to determine if there are areas that can be improved. SCFC personnel respond to all specific customer complaints on an individual basis.

3.5 *How do you build positive relationships with customers and stakeholders? Indicate any key distinctions between different customer groups.*

Complaints are recorded and promptly investigated to determine where problems exist and to resolve them quickly.

The SCFC meets with state forest user groups on a timely basis to discuss and plan for future recreational opportunities on Forestry Commission owned land.

The SCFC makes timely responses to elected officials seeking input.

The SCFC's Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Program reaches out to community planners and developers, residents and business owners in the state's expanding wildland urban interfaces. WUI is a hazard mitigation and education program designed to help these customers reduce the risks of wildfire in their communities and to protect lives and property.

The SCFC reaches educators, young people, and other interested citizens with exhibits and interpretive signage on Harbison State Forest. The agency cooperates with other natural resources agencies and organizations as well as forest industry to provide two popular forestry education programs. The Wood Magic Forest Fair is an award-winning, weeklong program on the benefits of forests and forestry offered to 4th grade classes statewide. The SC Teacher's Tour is offered for graduate credit during the summer. (Graph 7.1-10)

CATEGORY 4 – MEASUREMENT, ANALYSIS, AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

4.1 How do you decide which operations, processes and systems to measure for tracking financial and operational performance, including progress relative to strategic objectives and action plans?

Historically, measures have been used to monitor program accomplishments based on the primary mission and funding sources. The SCFC is actively shifting its key measures from a focus on activity levels to developing performance measures that are linked to the mission of the organization and the objectives of the strategic plan. Recently, new measures have been developed based on their importance to the overall success of our agency. The SCFC has continued to strengthen its focus on improving efficiency, effectiveness, quality, and outcome measures. Also, the SCFC has defined our key customer groups and related key requirements. The use of a variety of approaches to listen and learn from our customers provides opportunities for process improvements.

We continue to design measures linked directly to our mission and the objectives outlined in our strategic plan. Senior management seeks to find measures that track our progress in achieving strategic objectives and implementing action plans. The SCFC has a strategic planning process in place that includes active participation by senior management, a comprehensive SWOT analysis that includes a variety of customers and stakeholders from throughout the state, and employee input.

4.2 How do you use data/information analysis to provide effective support for decision making throughout your organization?

New data/information is reviewed to determine accuracy and relevance to our strategic goals. Data and/or information which meet these criteria are utilized to encourage the continuation of positive processes and to improve less effective aspects of our operations.

4.3 What are your key measures, how do you review them, and how do you keep them current with organizational needs and direction?

Customer Satisfaction Surveys are reviewed by several levels of management. Dissatisfied customers are contacted immediately to obtain additional information and to determine if actions can be taken to improve their levels of satisfaction.

Implementation of BMP measures is constantly being monitored with field inspections by the Environmental Management Section to insure that a high level of compliance is being maintained.

Wildland fire occurrence and suppression efforts are reviewed monthly to track trends for the current year.

Additional measures are collected and analyzed annually to be used in our mid- to long-range planning.

Enhance the Resource

- Forest-Based Economic Development Impact (Graph 7.1-1a&b)
- Forest Inventory and Analysis Plot Production (Graph 7.1-2)

Protect the Resource

- Average Fire Response Time in Minutes (Graph 7.1-3)
- Ten Year Average Fire Size for Southern States (Graph 7.1-4)
- Timber Theft and Fraud Cases Settled (Graph 7.1-5)
- Five Year Occurrence, Extended Investigations, and Prosecutions (Graph 7.1-6)
- Red-cockaded Woodpecker (Graph 7.1-11)
- BMP Harvesting Compliance Trends (Graph 7.1-7)
- SPB Losses in SC (Graph 7.1-8)

Raise Awareness about the Resource

- Participation and Demand for Wood Magic and Teachers Tour (Graph 7.1-9a&b & 7.1-10)
- Educator Participation and Demand (Graph 7.1-10)

Customer Satisfaction

- Customer Satisfaction Level for Seedling Products (Graph 7.2-1)
- Customer Satisfaction with Forestry Services (Graph 7.2-2)
- Customer Satisfaction with Forest Management Plans (Graph 7.2-3)

Financial

- Appropriations – State General Funds (Graph 7.3-1)
- Agency Operating Funds from State General Funds (Graph 7.3-2)
- Voucher Transactions as a Result of Visa Card Usage (Graph 7.3-3)
- Agency Fuel Costs (Graph 7.3-4)
- Federal Grants (Graph 7.3-5)
- Declining Purchasing Power (Graph 7.3-6)
- 1-800 Charges per 10,000 Calls Received (Graph 7.3-8)
- State Forest Payments to the Counties (Graph 7.3-9)

Employee Satisfaction, Involvement, and Development

- Employee Turnover Rate (Graph 7.4-1)
- Physical Fitness Program Participation (Graph 7.4-2)

Regulatory/Legal Compliance

- Smoke Management Notifications, Number and Average Call Length (Graph 7.5-1 & 7.5-2))

4.4 *How do you select and use key comparative data and information to support organizational and strategic decision making and innovation?*

During joint meetings with program managers from other forestry agencies in southeastern states common issues are discussed. Comparative data from similar state forestry organizations is available on a limited basis and each state records data differently. However, we strive to get the best comparative data available. Contacts made with southeastern states reveal that most state forestry organizations are just beginning to track meaningful performance measures. South Carolina is the only southeastern state which tracks dispatch response times through a statewide real time computer aided dispatch system. The Southern Group of State Foresters has adopted the moderate level work capacity test as the standard to measure wildland firefighter physical fitness.

Trips to other states and phone surveys have been used to collect information about organizational decisions in other forestry agencies. Consultation with our stakeholders and partners is used to gain insight for improving our agency.

4.5 *How do you ensure data integrity, timeliness, accuracy, security and availability for decision making?*

Measures and data have been used during program reviews at the area/unit and state levels. Senior management has instructed regional foresters and division directors to begin sharing performance data with personnel at all levels as a means of improving processes and generating feedback.

Our Computer Aided Dispatch System was updated to streamline our internal dispatch processes to improve our service to the public. With the updates, our data collection and analysis have improved.

We undergo annual audits of financial records and processes. An internal auditor reviews data collection processes on an ongoing basis.

4.6 *How do you translate organizational performance review findings into priorities for continuous improvement?*

The SCFC has outside reviews conducted by state and federal entities. Most recently a SGSF sponsored review of grant accomplishments was conducted for the SCFC Wildland Urban Interface Program. Improvements recommended by these reviews are studied to determine cost/benefit ratios, feasibility of implementation, and effectiveness. The SCFC regards all reviews as opportunities to improve our overall operations.

4.7 *How do you collect, transfer, and maintain organizational and employee knowledge (your knowledge assets)? How do you identify and share best practices?*

The SCFC has a state of the art Computed Aided Dispatch System that captures a tremendous amount of data about our daily operations. In addition, we utilize customer surveys, monthly staff meetings, and work teams to brainstorm solutions to challenges facing us. We share this information using communication tools such as an annual report and a weekly bulletin, which is distributed to every employee. Critical positions, occupied by personnel with known retirement dates, are targeted for early hiring of replacements to facilitate transfer of knowledge.

CATEGORY 5 – WORKFORCE FOCUS

5.1 How do you organize and manage work: to enable employees to develop and utilize their full potential, aligned with the organization's objectives, strategies, and action plans; and to promote cooperation, initiative, empowerment, innovation and your desired organizational culture?

The mission of the organization is based on the South Carolina Forest Fire Protection Act, which states the State Commission of Forestry shall direct forest fire protection work. The Commissioners and senior managers, including regional foresters and program managers, define the strategic goals and objectives to accomplish this responsibility. Unit foresters, state forest directors, and supervisors develop action plans. Division and department employees complete the tasks. Professional development seminars covering diversity, ethics, and hiring practices are provided to aid our employees in fulfilling their supervisory responsibilities.

Forest protection and management activities are accomplished through agency regions, which are further subdivided into units. The regions include Piedmont, Pee Dee and Coastal. The regions have common goals and objectives and the implementation is handled within the region, taking into account geographical concerns and other considerations. The specific implementation tasks are developed for each unit by the unit forester, supervisor, specialty foresters (BMP, stewardship, urban, FIA) and other employee input. The state forest system, which is comprised of 5 locations, also establishes specific action plans. Employee involvement at all levels increases the commitment to the agency's mission and goals.

Several agency activities are accomplished through the use of teams. For example, Incident Management Teams, fire review teams, accountability report, and interview and selection teams. The use of teams allows collaboration and cooperation among work units. In addition, the teams allow for knowledge sharing and employee empowerment and input toward the agency's goals and objectives. The nature of the work requirements of foresters and firefighters requires them to make decisions on the front line. Therefore, employee empowerment is built into their assigned responsibilities. For example, when dealing with a forest fire, the employee must assess and make decisions based on the situation at hand. In addition, on a regular basis, the agency's Best Management Practices (BMP) foresters are authorized to make assessments concerning logging sites that could result in the site ceasing to operate. The agency emphasizes extensive training in order for employees to appropriately respond to situations at hand.

The structure of the organization encourages and requires cooperation among divisions and departments to accomplish the mission of the agency. There is great cooperation among departments, particularly with forest fire activities. Employees whose normal day to day activities may involve forest management are fire line qualified and available to assist with fire control when necessary. The agency's dispatch centers, which are critical to the fire management division, continually utilize technology to assist the staff in accomplishing tasks and assessing the results. For example, the Computer Aided Dispatch System provides information on response times, acres burned and initial responder. Also, the agency recently started using a computer smoke management model to assist fire managers in assessing potential areas where the public could be affected by drifting smoke.

Employees' input and involvement are encouraged locally, regionally and nationally. Employees make presentations to civic organizations and local government, and they represent the SCFC on committees. Since the agency's core competency is forest fire management, employees have opportunities to serve on external teams with other law enforcement and protection agencies as subject matter experts.

5.2 *How do you evaluate and improve your organization's human resource related processes?*

The SCFC uses the following methods to evaluate and improve the human resource related process of the agency: routine review of processes, policies and procedures; feedback from employees; feedback from staff meetings; soliciting feedback from human resource liaisons in regional and unit offices; external audit results; exit interview information; conferences and workshops; administrative reports from partnering agencies such as the Office of Human Resources, SC Retirement System, and Employee Insurance Program. Any changes to procedures or incorrect application to existing policies and procedures are communicated to the applicable workforce or work unit. Changes to procedures are evaluated for efficiency and effectiveness. The human resource processes are developed in a manner to assist the agency toward mission and goal achievement as well as compliance with laws and regulations.

5.3 *How do you identify and address key developmental and training needs, including job skills training, performance excellence training, diversity training, management/leadership development, new employee orientation and safety training? How do you evaluate the effectiveness of this education and training? How do you encourage on the job use of the new knowledge and skills?*

Program managers are asked to recommend changes to ongoing training programs and to identify new training needed. The SCFC's training council developed training guides to set minimum training requirements for each position. The council meets periodically to review changes or additions to training needs. The SCFC implements national wildfire training standards and courses which are frequently updated. The Training Director schedules necessary training and maintains a database for each employee indicating training completed.

Hiring Practices training is provided to all supervisors each year to ensure affirmative action policies are followed. All supervisory personnel are required to complete the Supervisory Practices course offered by OHR. Leadership development is encouraged by identifying and inviting key employees to participate in the Certified Public Manager program and Executive Institute. This year, the SCFC will also be conducting Professional Development workshops for all supervisors and program managers to improve their skills in working with citizens and local government leaders.

Training guides for new employees are completed to ensure that all agency and safety policies are understood and followed. All equipment operators must complete 'Fire Suppression Equipment Operator Essential Task Orientation' within 30 days of employment. Effectiveness of Wildland Firefighting, Incident Management, First Aid/CPR, Forest Technician and other courses is evaluated by testing.

Familiarity with new technology helps an employee complete his or her work more efficiently. Some technical coursework is mandated in order to meet Federal requirements (such as GIS mapping). The Deputy State Forester makes expectations clear to supervisors about training that is required to develop new skills. Expectations are included on employees' EPMS.

5.4 *How does employee training contribute to the achievement of your action plans?*

Employee training will allow the SCFC to meet future demands and provide quality service with well-trained, qualified staff that enjoys a safe and rewarding work environment. Our main achievements would be:

- Maintain a capable, satisfied and diverse work team.
- Enhance professional development for agency personnel to efficiently, safely, and professionally provide better services.

- Review staffing levels and organizational structure to ensure the agency is in a position to supply needed services.
- Implement plans and establish performance measures to reduce the number of job-related injuries.
- Establish goals and implement vehicle and equipment operations safety training to reduce the number of accidents.

5.5 *How does your employee performance management system, including feedback to and from employees, support high performance and contribute to the achievement of your action plans?*

Employee performance is assessed and evaluated using the Employee Performance Management System (EPMS) designed for SC state government agencies. The system is designed to be a continuous process. The three components of the system include planning stage, on-going communication and evaluation stage. Upon hire or job classification change, a planning document is prepared which involves reviewing the employee's position description and establishing performance goals for the upcoming evaluation period. The success criteria established for the performance goals are stated in measurable terms. Additional objectives may also be established for the employee to complete during the evaluation period.

There should be ongoing communication between the employee and the manager concerning performance expectations. The system encourages communication between the employee and supervisor. The goals are established jointly and there is interim follow-up on progress during the year. The evaluation and appraisal interview are the main components of the yearly review process. The level of the employee's performance is evaluated as below, meets, exceeds or substantially exceeds on the previously established performance goals. The EPMS is deployed throughout the agency. The agency incorporates a universal review date for all employees with at least one year of service with the agency. The universal review date assists managers and supervisors with establishing annual goals for all employees on a consistent timeframe.

Managers and supervisors, along with input from the employee, establish the success criteria for performance. Some criteria are established based on policy or they may be deadline driven. The agency continues to work on aligning individual employee's performance success criteria to stated strategic objectives. For example, one goal outlined in the agency's strategic plan is to improve contacts and communication with state and local levels of government concerning forestry related issues. The action item to accomplish this goal is to increase participation in public hearings, including county council and planning commission meetings. A standard operating practice to ensure this item is implemented is to submit a report from the specific meeting attended. The agency follows up with any forestry related issues on the agenda. Thus far, components of the following job groups' EPMS are directly linked to strategic objectives: regional foresters, assistant regional foresters, unit foresters, project foresters, warden technicians, law enforcement, and firefighting supervisors. The requirement of a reviewer in the supervisor's chain of command, to review the employee's final evaluation assists in assuring deployment of success criteria linked to strategic plan items.

5.6 *How do you motivate your employees to develop and utilize their full potential?*

The agency utilizes the following tools and mechanisms to assist with motivating employees to develop and utilize their full potential:

- Service Award Presentations for 10, 20, 30 and 40 years of state service;
- Agency Service Awards for 5, 15, 25, 35 and 45 years of service;
- Public Service Recognition Week acknowledgement with lunch or gift;
- Recognition of accomplishment and achievements in the Weekly News Bulletin;
- Career path development defined by agency structure or specific job groups;
- Recognition and compensation increase for Forester Registration;
- Tuition assistance for course work related to job responsibilities;
- Flexible work schedules allow employees opportunities to balance professional and personal responsibilities;
- Successful completion of specific training courses provides opportunities for out of state fire detail and selection on incident management teams;
- Performance increases and bonuses for work performance or task completion which has a significant impact on the agency;
- Manager discussion with employees on career goals;
- Periodically individuals have represented senior management at designated meetings which leads to professional development.

The tools and mechanisms provide a means for the agency to recognize employee milestones related to service time, professional growth and individual development. The agency recognizes and shows appreciation to the employees for their contributions. The recognition of accomplishments also provides an opportunity for other employees to learn from their coworkers and to share professional knowledge.

5.7 *What formal and/or informal assessment methods and measures do you use to determine employee well being, satisfaction, and motivation? How do you use other measures such as employee retention and grievances? How do you determine priorities for improvement?*

Some of the assessment methods and measures the agency uses as indicators to determine employee well-being, satisfaction, and motivation include: lunches with the State Forester; exit interview information; follow up with managers and employees; open door policy; flexible work schedules; employee assistance program; career path development; workers compensation claims; and tuition assistance program. The feedback received from these methods and measures is used to assess the strengths and weaknesses of processes and procedures. The information received from the assessment methods and measures is used to evaluate what the agency is doing right or areas of improvement needed. Employee input is greatly valued and modifications or establishment of processes or procedures are considered based on their input.

Employee retention and grievance rates are used as indicators for employee satisfaction and motivation. The information from retention rate analysis is used as a knowledge sharing opportunity or improvement with the orientation program. Employees remaining with the agency have acquired knowledge, which can be shared with new employees or internal and external teams or partners. Information from grievances filed is used to improve applicable processes and communication with employees. The types and number of workers compensation claims filed are used to determine training needs or refreshers needed.

Information obtained from all methods and measures is carefully reviewed and analyzed. Priorities for improvement are determined based on meeting the agency's mission, employee well-being, and available budget. The agency recognizes the importance of employee well-being, satisfaction, and motivation with successful accomplishment of goals and objectives.

5.8 *How do you maintain a safe, secure, and healthy work environment? (Include your workplace preparedness for emergencies and disasters.)*

The SCFC stresses safety throughout its training and operations. The training program for many employees includes First Aid/CPR, Driver Improvement, and an annual refresher for fire line employees on the use of a fire shelter.

The SCFC requires wildland firefighters to participate and encourages voluntary participation in the physical fitness program. Incentives to complete the physical fitness test are provided. More information on the Physical Fitness Program is in Section 7.4. The SCFC puts an emphasis on personal safety and has policies and procedures on the use of PPE and safe fireline procedures. Employees are encouraged to participate in health screenings and health fairs.

The Safety Coordinator reviews all accidents and injuries to look for developing trends and to make recommendations to reduce future problems. He performs an annual inspection of agency facilities to ensure that OSHA and state regulations are followed. An evacuation plan has been developed for each facility owned by the SCFC.

Facilities that allow public access have audible alarms on the doors away from the main reception area. Dispatch Centers that do not require public access are kept locked after business hours for security. Exterior door locks have been replaced with keyless entry systems to maintain security with personnel turnover. Dispatch Centers have windows shuttered during major storm events and are equipped with emergency backup power and communication systems. Transportation in four wheel drive vehicles is made available to dispatchers during severe weather events.

The SCFC has developed the framework for a Continuity of Operations Plan, which includes preparedness for a pandemic and plans for creating employee awareness about pandemics and the plan.

CATEGORY 6 – PROCESS MANAGEMENT

6.1 *How do you determine and what are your key processes that produce, create or add value for your customers and your organization? How do you ensure that these processes are used?*

The agency Strategic Plan and Legislative Mandates are the main factors in determining what our key processes are.

The agency offers products and services to forest landowners and the general public in five key areas: forest protection, forest management, state forests, seedling production, and forestry education.

Forest Protection

The SCFC provides landowners with wildland firefighting assistance through a network of firefighters and equipment stationed throughout the state. Dispatching the closest firefighting unit is a key process in protecting the forest resource. The agency has three dispatch centers, located in Newberry, Florence, and Walterboro. These centers operate using a Computer Aided Dispatch System (CADS). A Statewide Dispatch Operations Coordinator provides operational and technical oversight of the dispatch centers. At this level, detailed and independent analyses of key success criteria are performed annually to facilitate consistency. Field personnel are provided with the tools to monitor their own activities. Reports with information such as response times, individual fire reports, monthly fire reports and non-emergency dispatches are distributed to supervisors monthly.

On July 1, 2005, the SCFC, utilizing National Fire Plan grants, upgraded to a commercial “off the shelf” 9-1-1 software system to provide Computer Aided Dispatch (CADS) for wildfire and emergency dispatch. The new CADS has improved the efficiency of our dispatch efforts (Graph 7.3-8) to wildland fire incidents (Graph 7.1-3). This technology gives us state-of-the-art dispatching capabilities unique throughout the nation. Such improved dispatch operations will help reduce the losses of life, property and natural resources to wildland fires.

The SCFC, with funding from the National Fire Plan, has designated 137 communities at extreme to high risk of wildfire and is working with them in conducting wildfire risk assessments. These on-going assessments provide homeowners, community planners, Fire Departments, and SCFC wildland firefighters with mitigation actions to reduce the wildfire hazard. A community that takes actions to reduce the risk of wildfire becomes eligible to receive national recognition as a “Firewise Community USA”. Planning of homeowner and community leader education workshops is on-going throughout South Carolina. Sixteen workshops were held last year with total attendance of over 490. Additional Firewise presentations were made at various conferences, including the Nursery and Landscape Association. Cooperative efforts with Clemson Extension Service were made to promote Firewise with neighboring communities around the Sand Hills Research and Education Center. Presentations were made to homeowners’ associations to encourage firewise developments. SCFC personnel manned Firewise exhibits at the SC Horticulture Expo and the SC Firemen’s Convention. Coordinators in each administrative region of the state ensure that homeowners, planners, and developers receive technical assistance and information regarding methods to reduce the risk of wildfires in their communities.

The SCFC administers National Fire Plan Volunteer Fire Assistance grant funds to assist Fire Departments in purchasing wildland fire fighting equipment, communication equipment, and personal protective equipment, and to provide training for fighting fires in the Wildland Urban Interface. This cooperative effort between the SCFC and Fire Departments is critical in achieving success in reducing losses to life, property, and our natural resources.

Wildfire Prevention Teams

Five Wildfire Prevention Teams were deployed in historically high areas of wildfire occurrence. The mission was to inform the public about how to conduct debris burning in a safe and lawful manner. Escapes from debris burning (mainly yard debris burning) are the number one cause of wildfires in the state.

Publications and products were developed and created with the message 'Think Before You Burn' to emphasize compliance with outdoor burning laws. This message was printed on posters, brochures, and table tents and distributed to local businesses, recycling centers, fire departments, and schools throughout the targeted areas. A 'Living with Fire' newspaper insert was distributed to the local newspapers serving these areas to help inform homeowners of the practices they can implement to make their homes Firewise.

Workshops were conducted for community leaders and homeowners in each of the targeted areas to provide them with information concerning wildfires, to demonstrate how to develop Firewise Communities, and to foster cooperative working relationships with local fire departments and community leaders.

The SCFC takes notifications of forestry, agriculture, and wildlife outdoor burning at the regional dispatch centers. All other notifications for outdoor burning, including construction debris, right-of-way debris, trade waste and yard debris, are received by an automated voice mail system. This system is an efficient way to process large numbers of calls (400,000+ per year) in a timely fashion and to deliver a consistent fire safety message to the burner. (Graphs 7.3-7 & 7.3-8)

New technology for detection of forest pests is constantly being evaluated. An example of technological advance is the use of the Global Positioning System (GPS) in conducting aerial surveys. By using a preprogrammed GPS, the SCFC was able to eliminate one of three personnel required for the survey. GPS technology also cut the time required for each survey by providing the aircraft pilot a constant and continuous flight track throughout the survey.

Forest Management

The SCFC provides forest landowners with assistance in managing their woodland. This involves a wide range of services including the development of management plans, the monitoring of environmental guidelines, and the re-inventory of South Carolina's forests. We perform on-site completion checks to ensure reforestation plans were followed and work performed properly, especially for customers receiving cost-share funds. We also provide training for loggers and contractors and provide courtesy exams while they are still on-the-job site performing the work. We utilize forest inventory data to encourage industry growth and development in South Carolina. We share this information with various development boards and the Department of Commerce.

Compliance with agency-approved environmental guidelines is monitored biannually on federal, state, industrial, and private woodlands. Results are published and widely distributed both in hard copy and over the Internet.

A key activity of the SCFC is continuous inventory of the state's forestland. Four two-person crews measure plots to exacting national standards. The USDA Forest Service is required to check a minimum of 5% of our plot work to ensure quality control. (Graph 7.1-2)

State Forests

The SCFC's state forests demonstrate sustainable multiple-use management to forest landowners and the general public. In FY 01, the state forests began developing a long-range plan. The plan was completed in June 2002 and approved by the Commissioners. Implementation of action items is now well underway.

The SCFC is nearing completion of the process to enhance management of the state forest system. This process combines a formal financial analysis and implementation of a Forest Resource Information System (FRIS) to provide managers with better information to ensure sustainable management and more predictable cash flow.

The system was developed by combining GIS and data based management systems with common forestry applicators, including forest inventory software, growth and yield models, and forest planning models.

Once the forest models are completed in the fall of 2007, they will allow the SCFC to optimize revenue from the state forests while ensuring the multiple uses and ecological values are maintained.

In accordance with the SC Code of Laws, twenty-five percent of revenue received from the sale of timber products on state forests is returned to the applicable county (Graph 7.3-9).

Local recreation advisory groups continue to provide assistance in implementing our recreation plans on state forests. They meet quarterly with the local forest directors.

State Lands

The SCFC provides forest management assistance to other state agencies that own woodland providing for the opportunity to manage for multiple uses, including wildlife habitat, recreation, environmental education, and sustainable forest products. Some of these agencies, such as the Department of Natural Resources, own thousands of acres of land, while others like ETV own just a few hundred. SCFC foresters develop forest management plans for these properties, provide timber marking and cruising services, and assist in obtaining the best price for forest products. During FY 07 the SCFC provided assistance to six state agencies (S C Department of Corrections, SC Department of Natural Resources, SC Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism , SC Department of Transportation, SC Department of Mental Health, and the University of South Carolina).

Seedling Production

The Nursery and Tree Improvement (N&TI) Section of the SCFC supplies forest landowners with high-quality forest tree seedlings. Approximately 7.2 million seedlings were produced during FY 07. A 10% customer survey is implemented annually as a feedback mechanism to direct future product design. Ninety percent of those responding are satisfied with the overall quality of the products and services provided by the N&TI Section of the SCFC (Graph 7.2-1). In response to our survey, we learned that:

- Most customers are generally satisfied with their seedling purchases from the SCFC.
- 38% of returned comments identified two specific areas for improvement: (1) less variability in seedling size for selected species and (2) more convenient pickup options for seedlings.

An annual financial analysis is completed to adjust seedling production and price. This analysis is critical as the SCFC nursery program is supported by the sale of seedlings and seed. In January 2006, the N&TI Section of the SCFC entered into a research agreement with Cellfor, a forestry biotechnology company, to develop and produce the high quality genetic planting stock specifically suited to South Carolina. Genetic development of new plant material will be completed at the agency's Niederhof Seed Orchard in Jasper County. 100,000 Cellfor seedlings were produced at Taylor Nursery for the 2006-2007 planting season. Another 100,000 Cellfor seedlings were transplanted into Taylor Nursery seedling beds in May of 2007.

Forestry Education

One of SCFC's primary missions has always been to promote an awareness and appreciation by the public of the ecological, social, and economic functions and benefits of the state's forests. The agency's Environmental Education Program has been decimated by budget cuts and loss of dedicated personnel due to retirements and internal restructuring. However, SCFC employees on the state forests and in the Information & Education Division continue to support the agency's popular Wood Magic and Teachers' Tour programs and produce technical and general informational materials on forestry and forest-related subjects. With fewer staff available for direct classroom instruction, educators in grades K-12 have become focal points for professional development training. SCFC has led the field in correlating educational training and programs to the SC Department of Education's Curriculum Standards in order to stay current with changing educational reforms. All programs and training are content oriented and standards-based to ensure that they meet the requirements of the State Department of Education (SDE). Computer based and web based educational programs are used whenever possible. Partnerships have been formed with federal and state agencies and the private sector to provide our remaining educational programs at low cost.

All educational programs offered by SCFC are evaluated and adjusted to meet perceived needs. The demand for these quality programs exceeds SCFC's ability to accommodate requests. (Graph 7.1-9 & 7.1-10)

6.2 *How do you incorporate organizational knowledge, new technology, changing customer and mission-related requirements, cost controls, and other efficiency and effectiveness factors such as cycle time into process design and delivery?*

A new Computer Aided Dispatch System (CADS) has been installed containing features, functions, and enhancements outlined in a request for proposals that incorporated suggestions and recommendations from dispatchers, fire managers, and information technology professionals. An "off-the-shelf" solution was selected over a custom developed system to control costs and to utilize technology and functions developed for 9-1-1 systems. Enhancements utilizing the power of GIS software are planned to improve the efficiency in taking Smoke Management Burn Notifications, locating wildfires, and identifying and notifying the closest available resources to an incident.

In recent years the SCFC has gone through numerous changes. Some of these changes have caused a reduction in our ability to provide services, primarily due to a decrease in staffing levels. During these years of change, the agency's leadership has continued to seek ways of becoming more efficient and effective. The SCFC surveys customers regarding our performance. (Graphs 7.2-1, 7.2-2 & 7.2-3) Our web site has been improved and updated so that citizens can obtain information and more easily contact us. We have continued to develop and conduct an extensive training program for our employees. Our aim is to seamlessly weave new technologies and improved employee performance into a tightly integrated system to deliver the best possible service to the people of South Carolina.

6.3 *How does your day-to-day operation of these processes ensure meeting key performance requirements?*

Forest Protection

The new CADS automates the process of determining compliance with Smoke Management Guidelines when dispatchers take burn notifications. This should reduce the process time (Graphs 7.5-1 & 7.5-2) and increase accuracy in complying with state regulations. Several key processes for dispatching resources to wildfires are now automated and/or improved to help reduce overall response times (see table 7.1-3). Closest available units are determined by CADS based on the road system. The new system allows for the incorporation of technology for automatic vehicle location to improve response time and assure safety of agency employees.

The automated yard debris burning notification system was modified so that all non-smoke management type vegetative debris burning notifications could be directed to that system as of July 1, 2001. This change redirects approximately 30,000 calls per year from our dispatch centers to the automated system. The reduction in call volume allows dispatchers to more efficiently handle smoke management notifications, radio communications, and wildfire calls. The automated system can handle 24 calls simultaneously, eliminating a caller's time on hold. Another benefit of this change was an overall reduction in the average cost per ten thousand calls. (Graph 7.3-8)

Forest Management

In general, statewide programs, such as Environmental Management and Forest Inventory and Analysis, are directly supervised by a Columbia staff forester with specific training in that program area.

The SCFC is a major cooperator in the 2006 National Aerial Photography Program (NAPP). NAPP is a US Geological Service program for obtaining 1:40,000 scale, color infrared, aerial photography in a "leaf off" state. Between January and April 2006, 75% of the state was acquired and the remaining 25% (consisting of rejected photos or areas that leafed out prior to completion in 2006) will be acquired in 2007. This flight will replace photography of South Carolina taken in 1999. The SCFC is working with the Department of Natural Resources to have a state contract issued to produce prints from the 2006-2007 flight for various program applications. Digital Orthophoto Quarter Quads (DOQQs) will be produced from this photography and distributed to field personnel as it becomes available. DOQQs can be utilized in desktop mapping and geographical information systems to develop recommendations and maps in the delivery of forest management services to forest landowners.

State Forests

Since state forests are required to operate on receipts and receive no state appropriated funds, a key performance requirement of our state forests is accurate budget planning. The implementation of a harvest scheduling model will assist in more accurate prediction of annual revenues.

Seedling Production

Key success criteria are included in Nursery and Tree Improvement facility manager's EPMS rating criteria. Success criteria include measures of seed & seedling quality, as well as protection of the productive capability of the nursery soil. The SCFC is a member of the Auburn University Cooperative whose staff provides technical oversight. Internally, agency staff reviews seedling production periodically.

Forestry Education

Individual evaluation by participants is a key component of all SCFC educational programs, including professional development programs such as Project Learning Tree and the SC Teachers Tour. Program changes are constantly being considered and made based on these participant evaluations.

Pre- and post-test are given to participants in the Wood Magic Forest Fair to evaluate program effectiveness. The program has consistently shown significant increases in scores between the two tests. Fourth grade teachers are sent pre-visit materials as well as post-visit materials and lessons to enhance the content of the Wood Magic program.

In general, there is an overwhelming demand for SCFC forestry education programs. (Graph 7.1-9a & 7.1-10)

6.4 *How do you systematically evaluate and improve your key product and service related processes?*

Forest Management

Customer surveys are sent out following services work or delivery of management plans. (Graph 7.2-2 & 7.2-3) Responses are returned directly to the regional forester and analyzed, with particular attention given to any negative responses. Contacts are made with landowners to review responses and correct any problems with service delivery. Beginning in FY 08, we will analyze customer survey responses to develop initiatives for program improvements in services and management plan development and delivery.

6.5 *What are your key support processes, and how do you improve and update these processes to achieve better performance?*

Information Technology

Most aspects of our business involve technology and information management. We have established a presence on the Internet as a means to disseminate information. Steps are underway to offer sales of state forest recreational permits and Nursery and Tree Improvement seedlings through the **SC.gov** Internet portal.

The Information Systems group is responsible directly and indirectly for the maintenance and support of the agency's wide area network, 1 Windows NT Server, 8 Windows 2003 Servers, and over 200 computer users and their software applications. A major effort began in FY 04 to replace all computers and servers from Microsoft Windows NT 4.0 operating system and upgrade computers and software to meet the State CIO's South Carolina Enterprise Architecture standards. In FY 06 with a large majority of the agency's 5-7 year old Windows NT 4.0 computers being replaced or upgraded to Windows XP. This effort continued in FY 07 with the decommissioning of all but one Windows NT server. A goal was established to reduce the agency's replacement cycle for computers from 5-7 years to 3-5 years.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology and spatial data is being used to improve and implement new processes in decision making. Using a National Fire Plan grant, a Fire Risk Assessment model is being created to help identify high fire risk areas of the state on a daily basis. A Smoke Model developed by the USDA Forest Service is being tested to improve prediction capabilities to mitigate the impact smoke from prescribed burns and wildfires may have on major highways. The goal is to reduce or eliminate highway fatalities due to smoke. Historical fire occurrence data is being spatially analyzed to aid managers in making resource allocation decisions and reducing response times to wildfires.

Training Programs

Wildland fire suppression and incident management are the core of SCFC training programs. All agency personnel are provided basic incident management training in the NIMS IS-700 class. All firefighter and emergency response personnel are trained in fire behavior, fire suppression tactics, and receive additional incident management training. Foresters, technicians, and other technical staff are trained in emerging issues and technology for forest and natural resource management. Foresters and technicians in the Forest Health, Best Management Practices and Forest Inventory Analysis programs receive specialized training in their respective areas. Supervisors and human resource/administrative staff participate in Supervisory Practices and Hiring Practices training. Currently four individuals are enrolled in the Certified Public Manager Program.

In FY 07, 104 training sessions were held for agency personnel. Additionally, the SCFC held 20 Fire Management sessions for 232 non-SCFC personnel, mostly from local fire departments. Four Certified Prescribed Fire Manager courses were taught for 170 individuals, most were not agency employees.

Accounting, Procurement and Human Resources

Accounting, Procurement and Human Resources are essential support processes to firefighting and other field personnel. The staffs of these departments continually monitor existing processes and procedures. During the past year, transaction processing time was tracked and the results are noted in Category 7 under question 3. We work with the State Auditor's and Materials Management Offices, as well as the Office of Human Resources on audits to update and improve current processes.

6.6 How does your organization determine the resources needed to meet current and projected budget and financial obligations?

The agency monitors activities and costs in order to ensure resources are available to meet current demands. Based on these activities and costs the agency is able to see the needs that are not being met due to lack of financial resources and addresses these issues through the annual state appropriation budget request and in applications for federal grant funds. Due to the inability to receive full funding of requests, the agency has to make concessions and prioritize activities each fiscal year to direct resources and protect the landowners of SC. Deferred maintenance, aerial detection contracts and replacement of firefighting equipment are just a few examples of items that may be cut back or delayed to allow the agency to meet its obligations with the financial resources available.

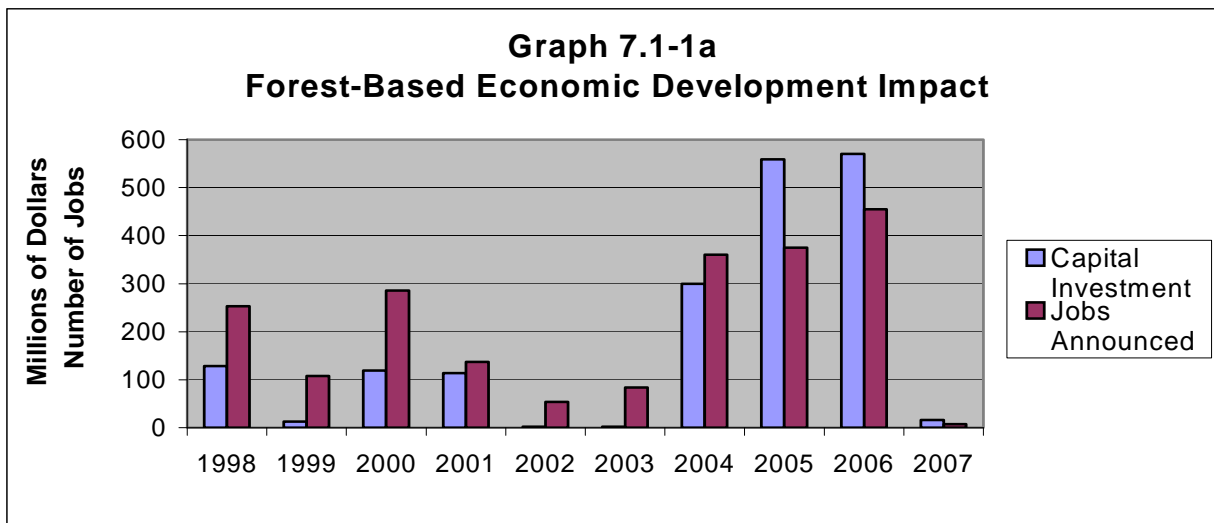
CATEGORY 7 – RESULTS

7.1 *What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of mission accomplishment and organizational effectiveness?*

Enhance the Resource

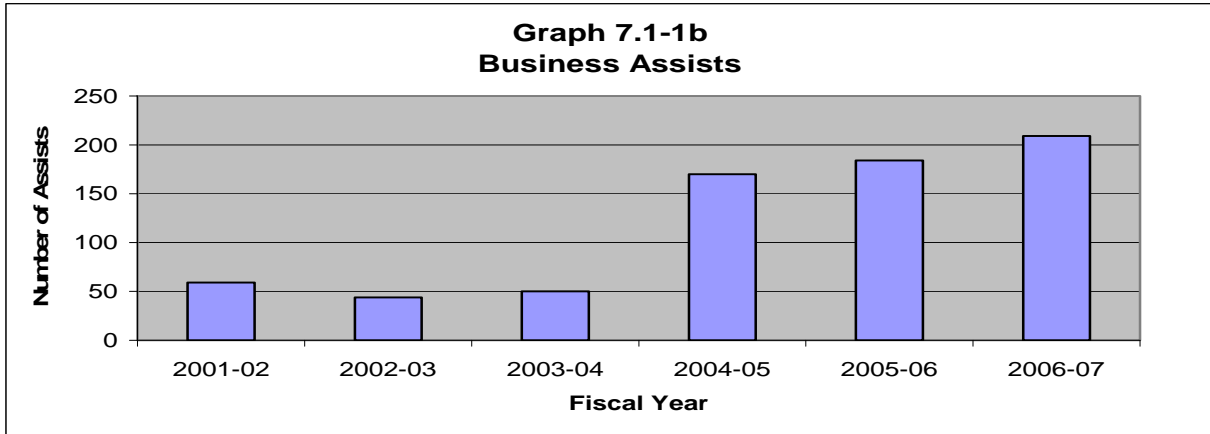
Rising interest rates and a tightening of the money supply contributed to a dramatic downturn in the housing construction industry. The federal funds rate peaked in August 2006 after a three-year period of incremental increases. 30-year fixed rate home mortgages peaked in July 2006 at 6.76%. Partly as a result of higher borrowing costs, the number of new home starts fell 39% by January 2007. Residential housing is a major outlet for lumber and wood panel products. Reduced home construction resulted in lower demands for these wood products and depressed lumber, plywood, and OSB prices throughout the 2006-2007 fiscal year.

The rapid expansion of the forest products industry in South Carolina over the past three years slowed considerably in terms of new capital investment. Two projects, a pole plant in McCormick County and a biomass steam plant on the Savannah River Site in Aiken County, were announced this fiscal year. However, the limited number of announcements belies the interest in industry expansion in the state, especially the interest in renewable energy projects. Of the 20 forest products-related economic development projects that were active in FY 2006-2007, 15 projects were biomass energy related. Pellets plants for export of biomass to European markets were the primary area of activity.



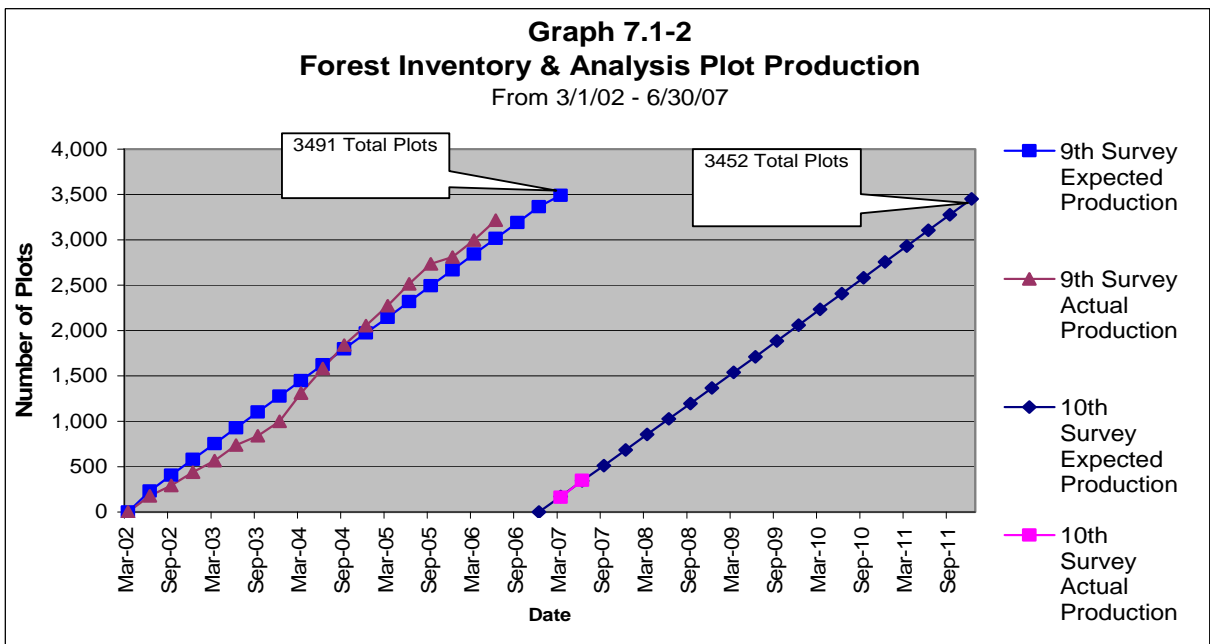
Acquisition of existing forest products facilities, primarily by Canadian firms, continued the trend in increasing foreign investment in South Carolina's natural resources. Facilities owned by Bowater, Georgia Pacific, International Paper, New South, and Weyerhaeuser were acquired by Abitibi-Consolidated, Canfor, Domtar, Flakeboard, Roseburg Forest Products, and West Fraser Timber during this fiscal year. All of the new owners are Canadian firms except for Roseburg Forest Products which is based out of Oregon. Abitibi and Bowater combined in a merger of equals to form the 3rd largest public paper and forest products company in North America. The corporate headquarters moved from Greenville, South Carolina to Montreal, Canada.

During the 2007 fiscal year, the SCFC Resource Development Division represented the agency and forestry community through 10 statewide and regional economic development organizations. The SCFC actively participated in the SC Competitiveness Initiative representing the forestry-related clusters. In addition, the SCFC took the lead in promoting a *Grow Some Green* tree planting campaign using radio advertisements, direct mail outs, and presentations at landowner meetings. Twenty-one presentations were made to forestry groups about forest sustainability throughout the year. Finally, 209 individual business assists were made to address single-issue requests.



In fiscal year 2007, the Forestry Commission's Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program completed 623 FIA plots. The FIA program completed the 9th survey of the state and began the 10th survey in January 2007, as illustrated in Graph 7.1.2. In addition, the FIA program completed 100 product utilization studies across the state.

The FIA program is currently fully staffed with four two-person crews located in strategic locations across the state. If funding and staffing remain constant, expected completion of the 10th survey is December, 2011. Data for the 9th survey will be available online by December, 2007.



Protect the Resource

Table 7.1-3
SUMMARY AND COMPARISON OF DISPATCH TIMES
FOR FISCAL YEAR 1999 through 2007

	Average Minutes								
	FY 99	FY 00	FY 01	FY 02	FY 03	FY 04	FY 05	FY 06	FY 07
Dispatching ¹	6.11	5.68	5.42	6.27	5.12	5.10	6.33	4.18	3.56
Contact Establish ²	4.39	4.14	4.00	3.09	4.15	4.18	3.83	4.47	4.21
Rolling ³	4.38	4.37	3.97	3.69	4.13	3.83	4.22	4.11	4.97
Enroute ⁴	8.32	8.40	7.72	6.06	7.92	7.95	7.10	8.44	12.75
Travel ⁵	24.48	23.60	23.03	22.60	22.49	22.39	22.11	20.09	22.88
Response ⁶	36.92	35.05	34.40	34.80	35.70	33.57	35.19	32.45	35.54

¹ Time between initial report of wildfire and first attempt to contact initial attack warden.

² Time between first attempt to contact warden and when contact was established.

³ Time between contact established with warden and his enroute time.

⁴ Time between first attempt to contact warden and his enroute time.

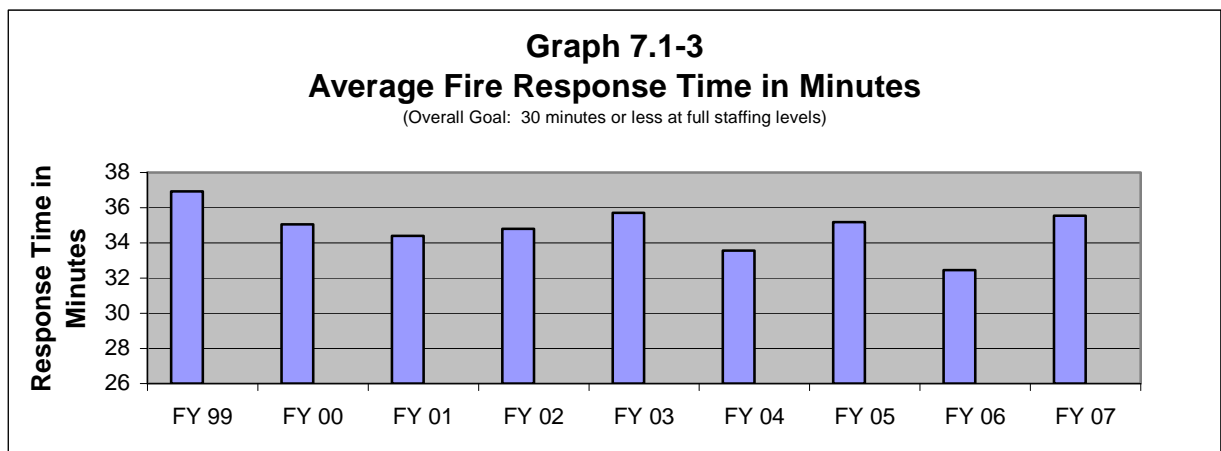
⁵ Time between going enroute and arriving at wildfire.

⁶ Time between initial report of wildfire and arrival of initial attack warden.

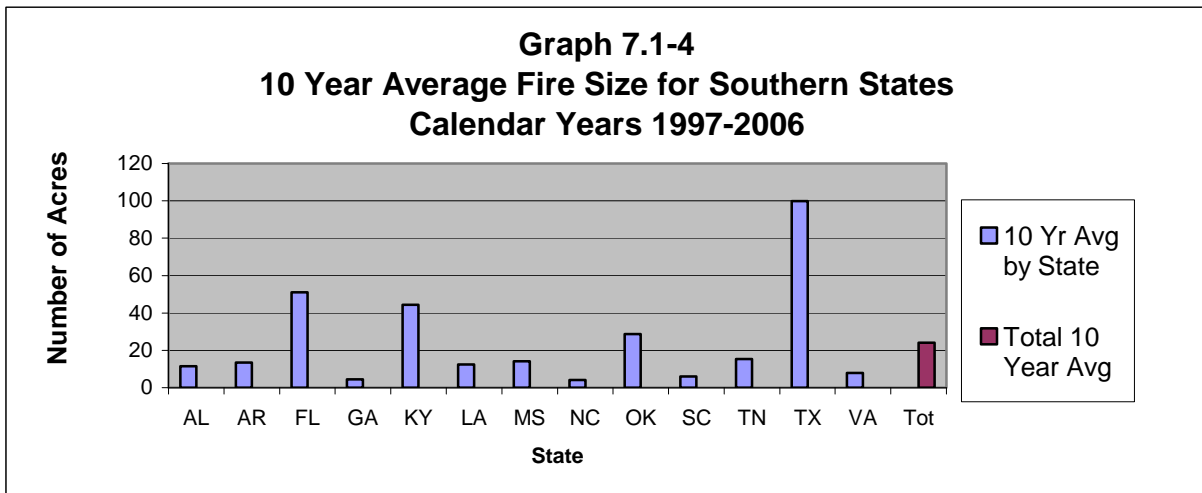
The chart above shows various benchmarks in the process of responding to a wildfire. With the implementation of the new CADS in FY06, the average time from receiving the wildfire call and assigning a firefighter to it was reduced by 2.15 minutes. This was further reduced during FY07 by another 37 seconds on average.

Response time to wildland fires is dependent upon many factors, some of which are beyond our control, such as traffic congestion and budget related staffing levels. We refer to fire response time as the time from when we receive the first report of a wildfire until the time our fire warden arrives on the scene.

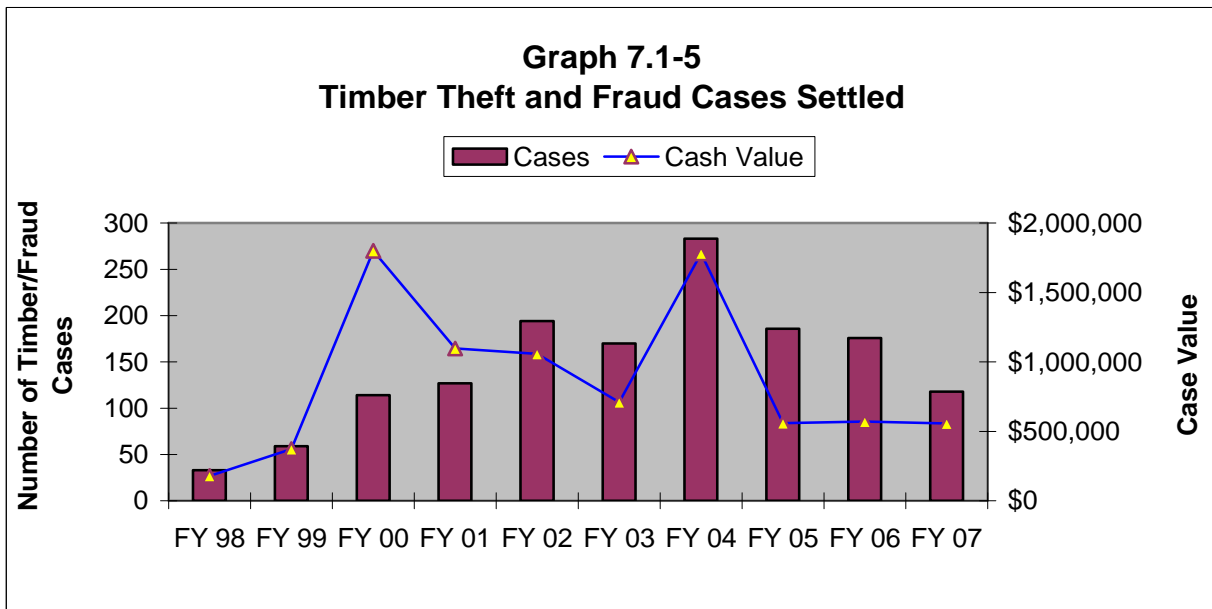
Internally we measure the different segments of response time and strive to improve each segment with a goal of reducing overall response time. Graph 7.1-3 illustrates that our average response time for FY 07 was 35.54 minutes. This results in a 3.09 minute increase in the statewide average response time in FY 07 compared to FY 06. Since we are currently not operating at full staffing levels we must continually realign our workforce in order to respond in a timely manner.



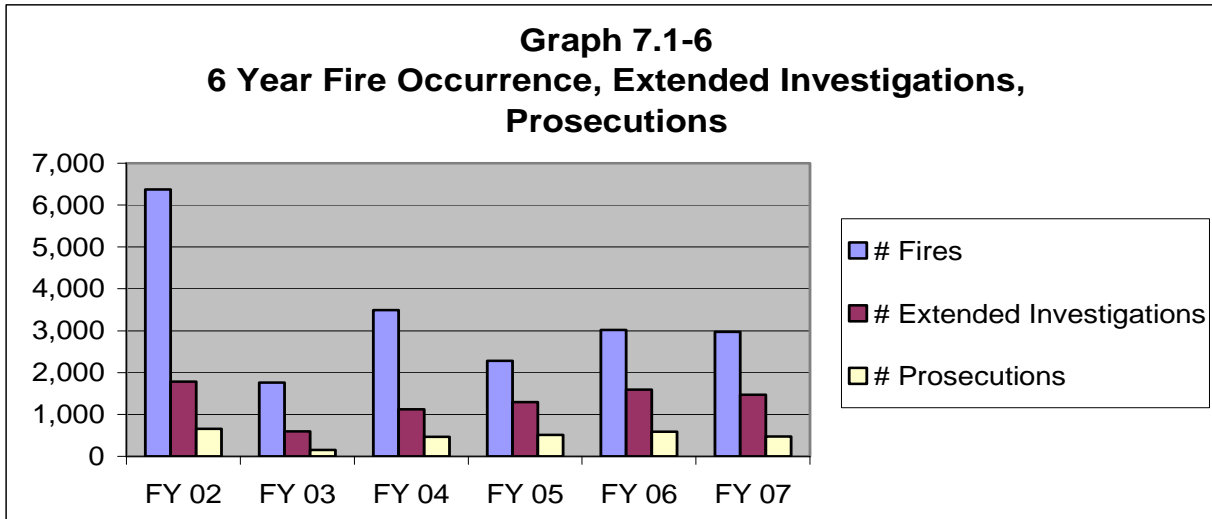
The SCFC measures and compares the average fire size on state and private lands with twelve other southern states. The 10-year average fire size is 24.1 acres per fire for the thirteen southern states. South Carolina has the third lowest 10-year average fire size with 5.9 acres per fire as shown in Graph 7.1-4.



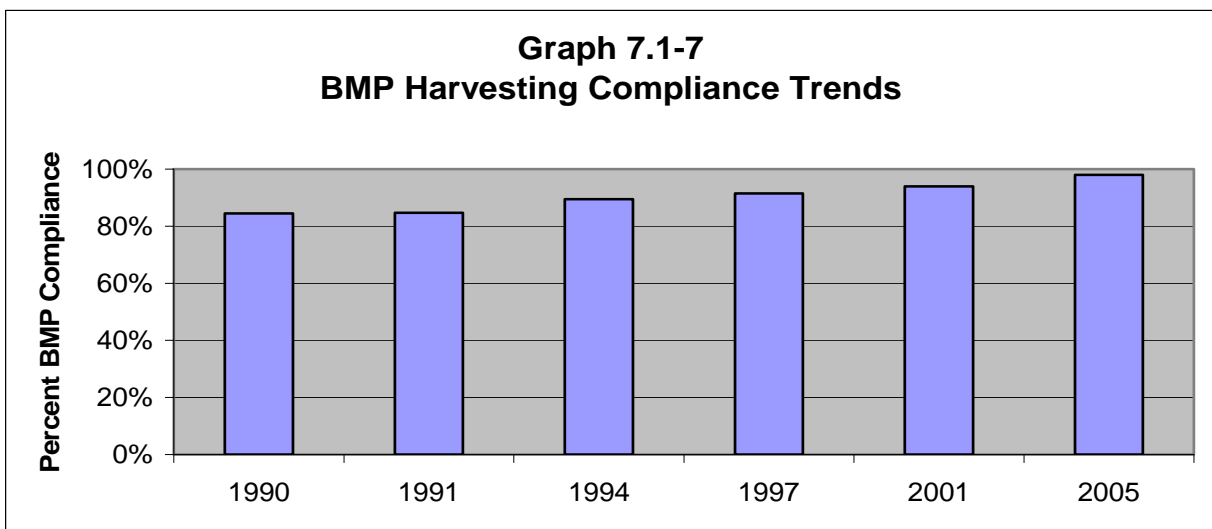
The Law Enforcement Program strives to reduce woods arson and forest product theft and fraud. The program reinforces fire prevention efforts through the enforcement of state fire laws. During FY 07, the agency had 36 commissioned officers, including 5 full-time investigators. Although the number of timber theft/fraud cases increased this year, due to sustained, aggressive enforcement of timber transaction laws, the value of each case has drastically reduced. (Graph 7.1-5)



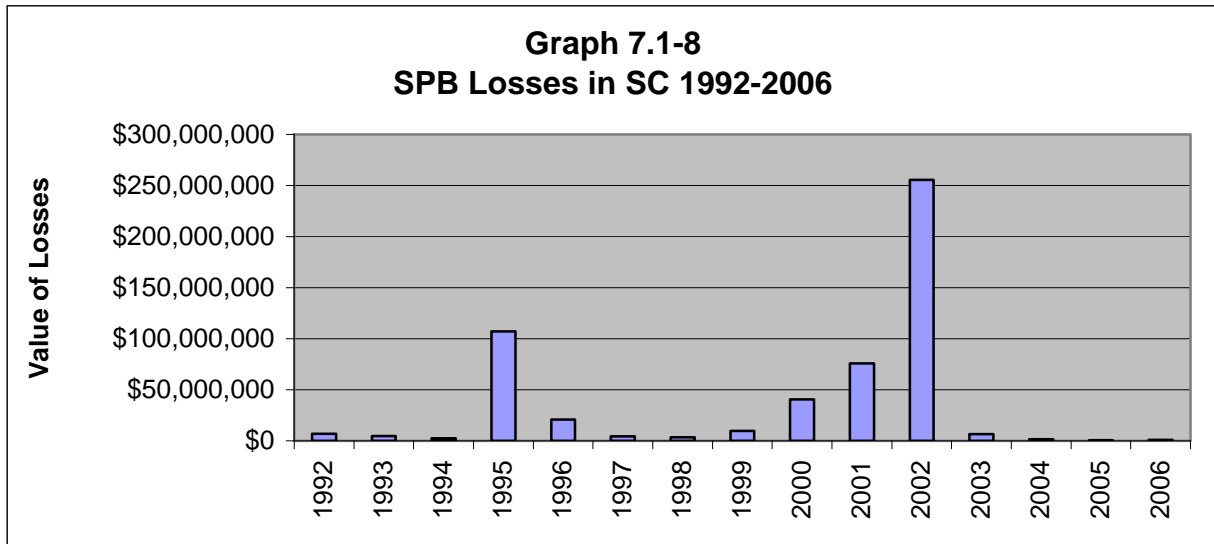
Extended investigation of wildfires, especially arson related, was emphasized during the year, but we had a reduction in the number of fire-related prosecutions. (Graph 7.1-6) Woods arson was the likely cause for 130 wildfires. Five individuals, responsible for 49 wildfires, were prosecuted for woods arson. The SCFC's Law Enforcement Program serves as a benchmark for our neighboring states, which currently do not actively investigate timber theft cases.



Graph 7.1-7 shows compliance with harvesting Best Management Practices from previous surveys. Compliance for BMPs related to timber harvesting rose to 98% for 2005, demonstrating continual improvement since monitoring began in 1990. Compliance for harvesting BMPs was 84.5% in 1990, 84.7% in 1991, 89.5% in 1994, 91.5% in 1997, and 94.0% in 2001. A new survey was initiated for 2007-2008 that will include in-depth evaluation of 150 randomly-selected harvesting operations throughout the state, comparison with BMP Courtesy Exam data, and expert review of monitoring practices.



The Southern Pine Beetle (SPB), endemic to SC, builds to epidemic levels on a 5 to 10 year cycle. The preliminary indicators point to the possibility of an increase in SPB activity in the next 1-3 years. Since 1995, SC has suffered the two worst outbreaks on record, with losses exceeding a half-billion dollars. (Graph 7.1-8) SCFC developed a southern pine beetle prevention program to reduce losses on privately owned woodlands. During the year 294 landowners have completed SPB prevention or restoration practices on over 9,700 acres.

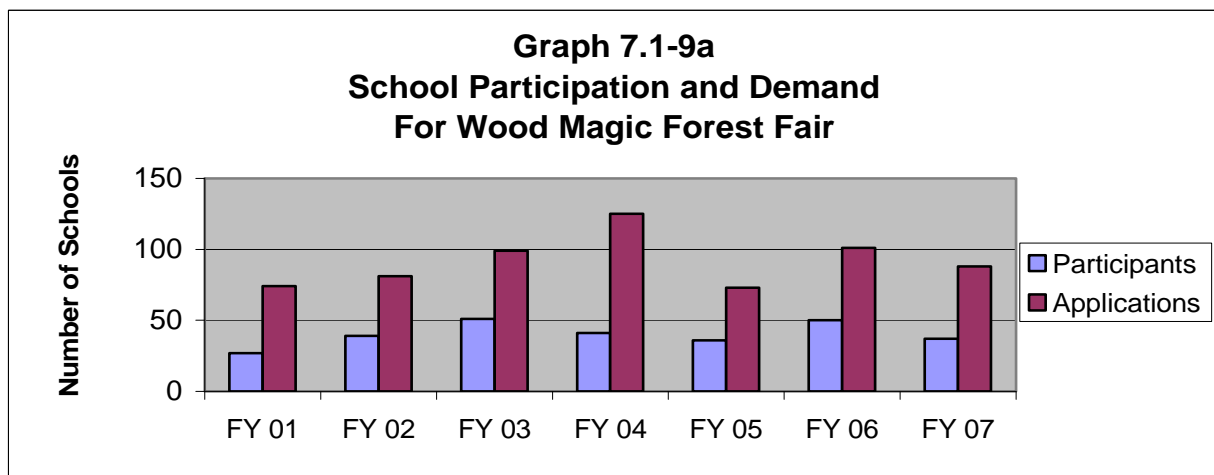


Raise Awareness about the Resource

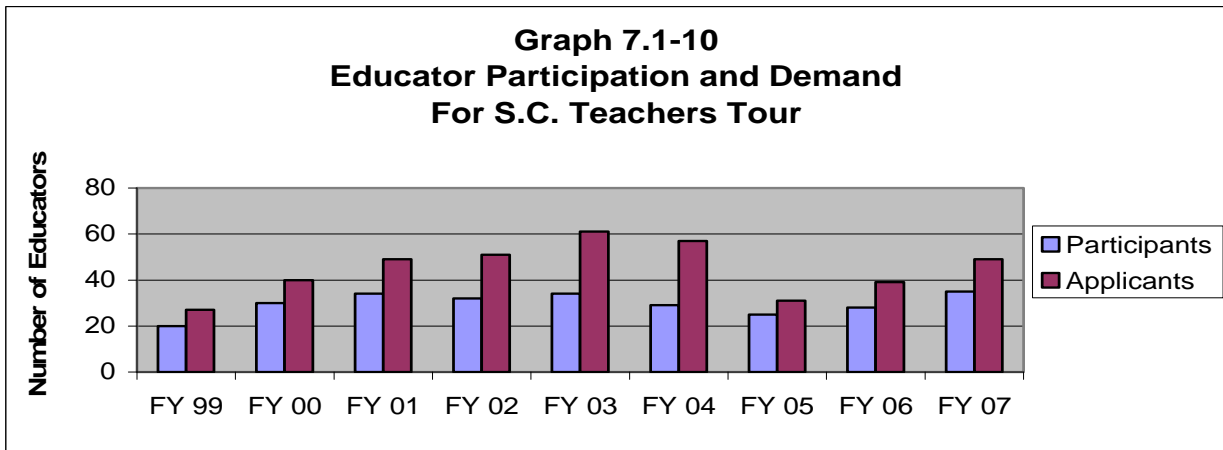
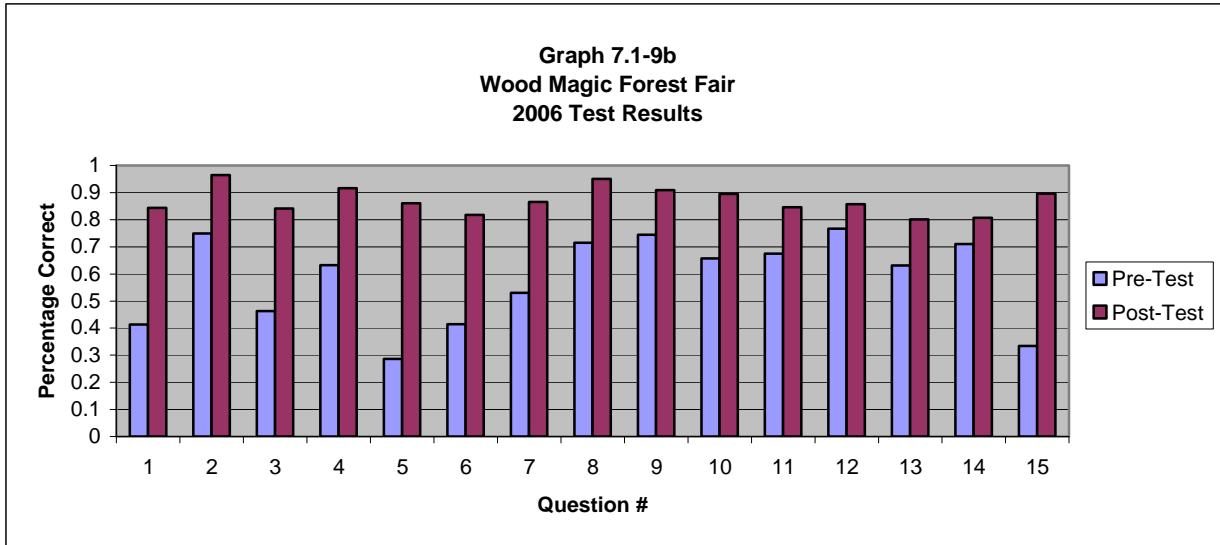
The SCFC strives to reach South Carolina's school children through "train the trainer" programs for teachers such as Project Learning Tree (PLT) and the annual S.C. Teachers Tour. Each of these programs has a multiplier effect. By training educators, we are continuously reaching thousands of students in return.

The Wood Magic Forest Fair, designed for fourth graders, also equips teachers to explore such topics as sustainable forestry and recycling. All SCFC education programs meet the state's requirements for teacher certification and classroom instruction.

In recent years, interest in and applications for both the Teachers Tour and the Forest Fair have exceeded the number of programs we were able to offer. The primary limiting factor is the growing scarcity of qualified instructors due to SCFC and cooperator staff reductions and budget restraints. (Graph 7.1-9 and 7.1-10)

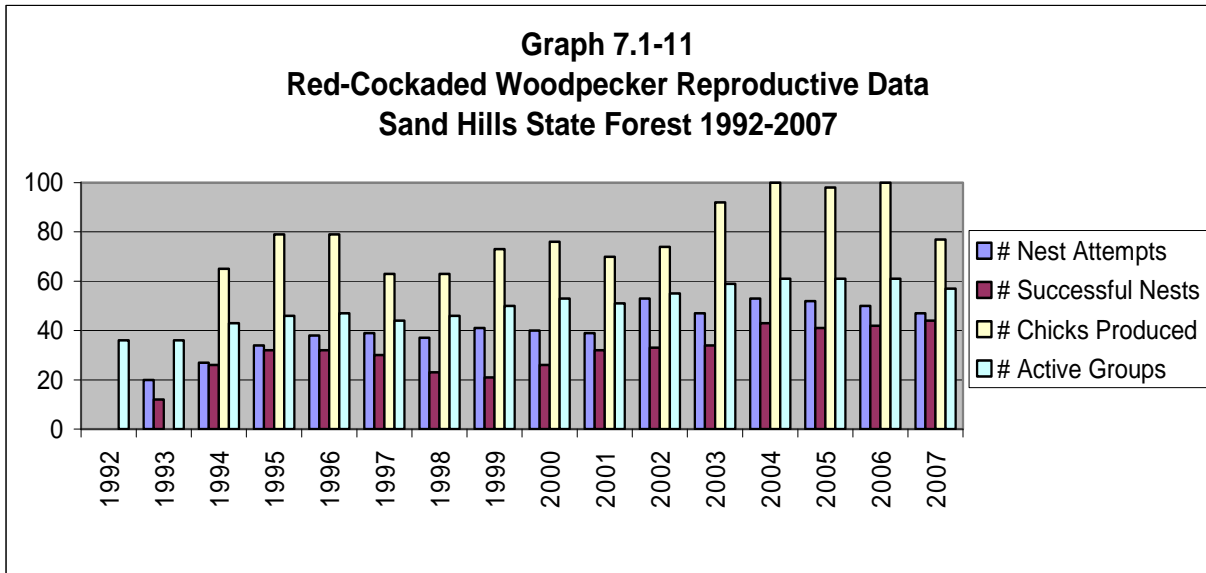


On average pre-course test results were 58% and post-course test results were 87%. Student understanding improved by 29%.



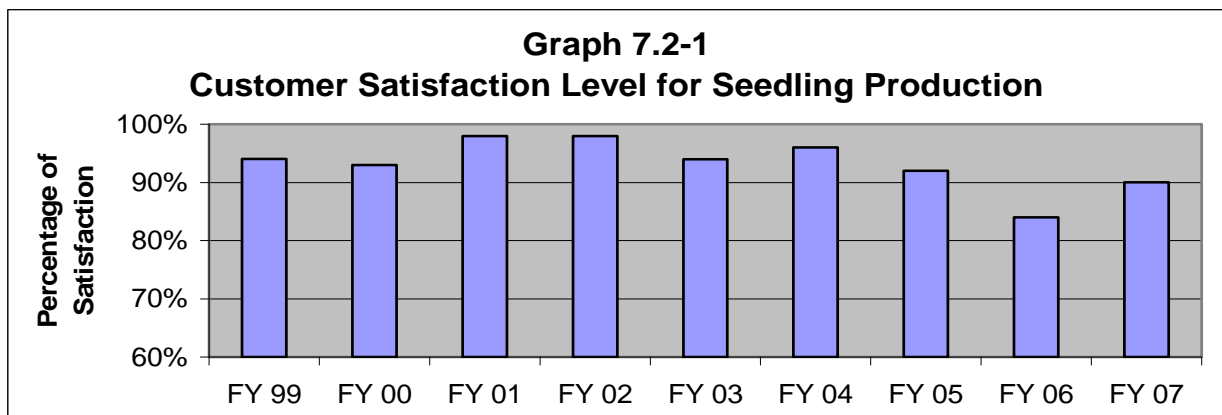
Sand Hills State Forest is one component of a recovery population in Chesterfield County for the federally endangered Red Cockaded Woodpecker. In cooperation with SC DNR biologists, habitat for this species on the state forest is managed to improve conditions for nesting and foraging. Management activities include installation of artificial cavities, control of mid-story vegetation and establishment of appropriate tree species and stand density to provide recruitment and foraging habitat. A long range recovery goal of 127 red-cockaded woodpecker clusters has been set for Sand Hills State Forest.

Graph 7.1-11 shows species reproductive trends from 1992-2007. The number of active woodpecker groups on Sand Hills State Forest has increased from 36 groups in 1992 to 57 groups in 2007.

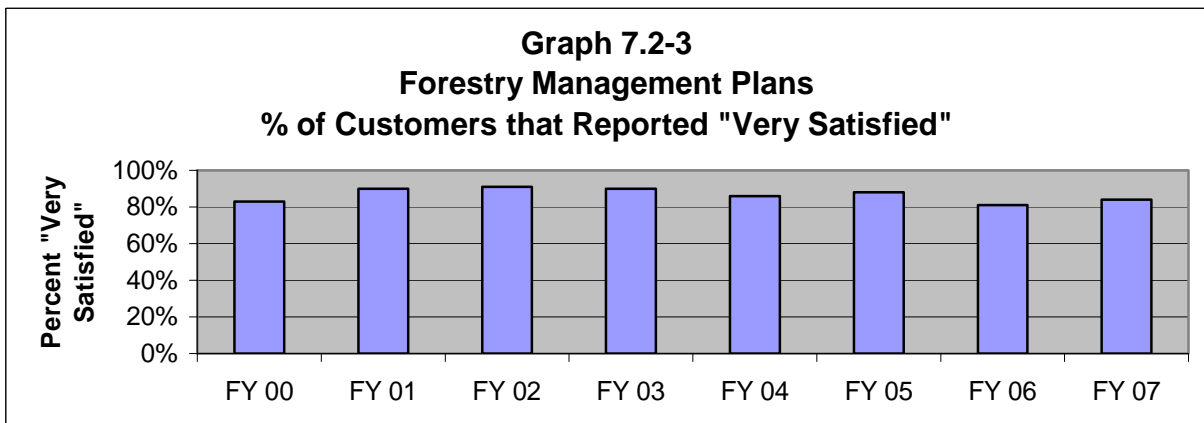
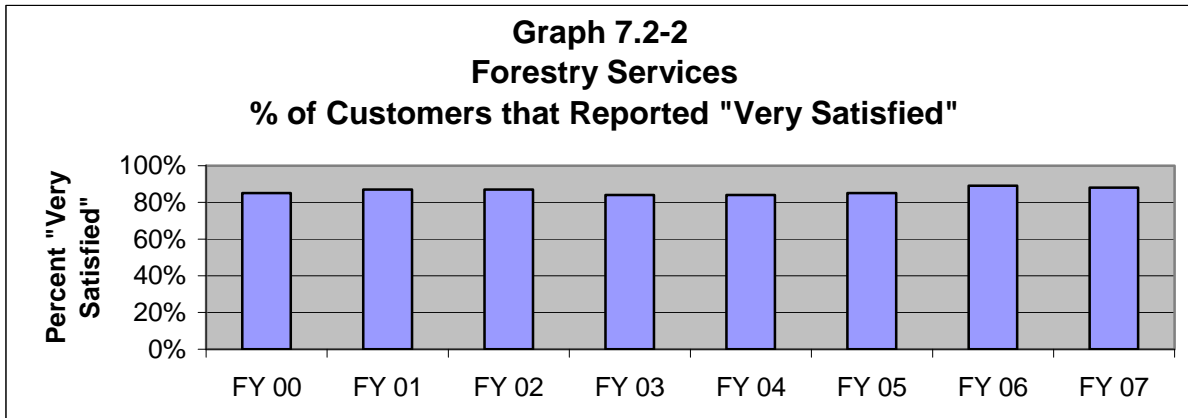


7.2 What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of customer satisfaction?

In 1998, we began measuring customer satisfaction with our forest tree seedling products. Over that period of time, customer satisfaction has averaged 94%, ranging from 84% to 98% as illustrated in the following graph. In FY 07, 90% of our customers stated that they were either very satisfied or satisfied with the overall quality of the products and services provided by the Nursery and Tree Improvement Section of the Commission. We routinely review comments on returned surveys looking for ways to improve our product and delivery systems. 35% of the comments were complimentary of the nursery program. 38% of the comments identified two specific areas for improvement: (1) less variability in seedling size for selected species and (2) more convenient pick-up options for seedlings.

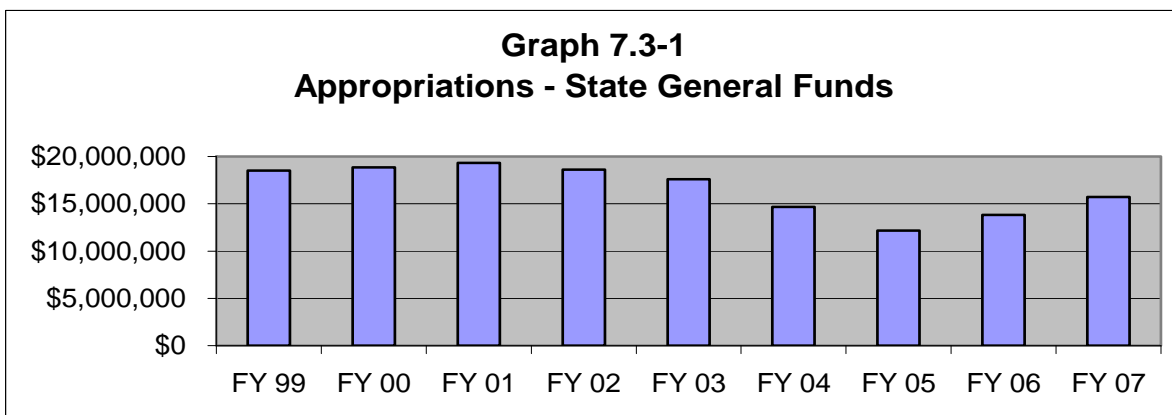


In 1999 we began measuring customer satisfaction levels with our forestry services and our technical forest management assistance. Graphs 7.2-2 and 7.2-3 illustrate our overall satisfaction levels.

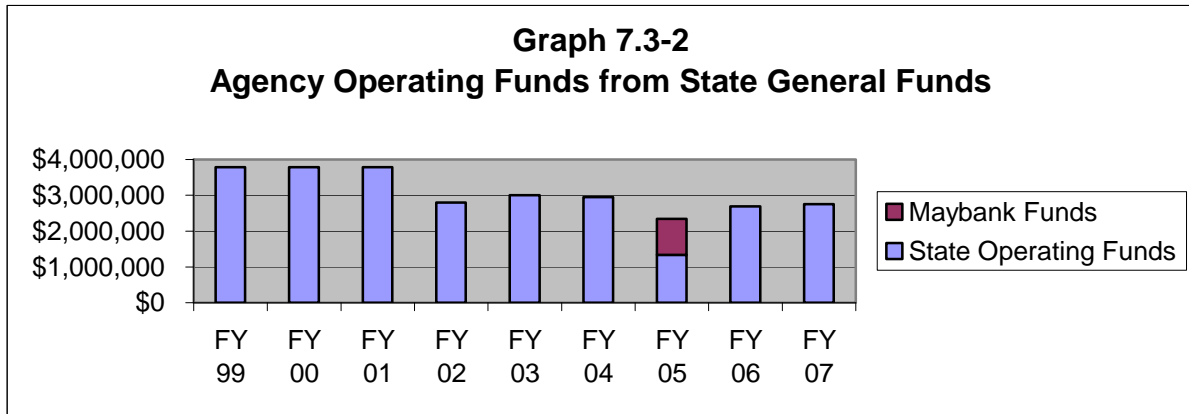


7.3 What are your performance levels for the key measures of financial performance, including measures of cost containment, as appropriate?

The SCFC's recurring State Appropriated funds have been cut from \$19,742,565 in FY 02 to \$15,727,933 in FY 07 (Graph 7.3-1). With the majority of state appropriated funds being used for salaries and benefits, the agency has had a corresponding reduction in its workforce (Section II, 1 and 3).

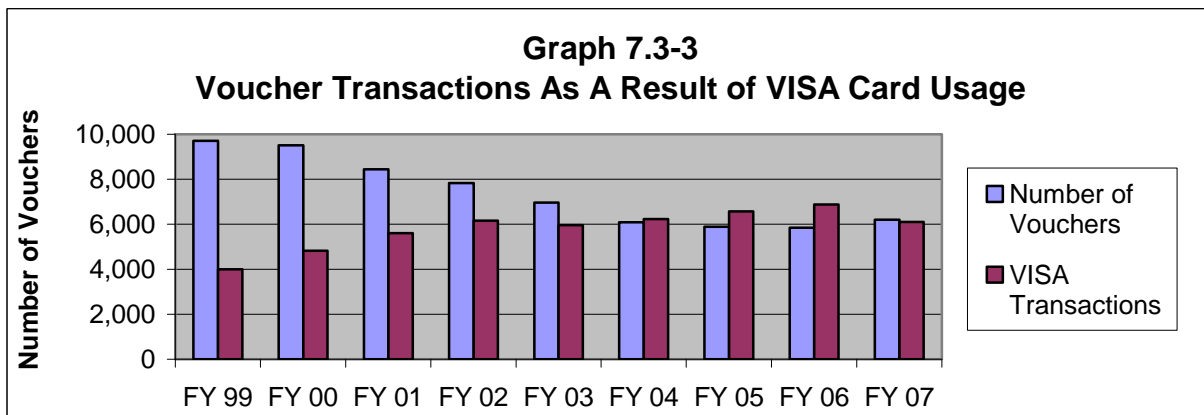


Agency operating funds from state general funds also have been reduced significantly (Graph 7.3-2).

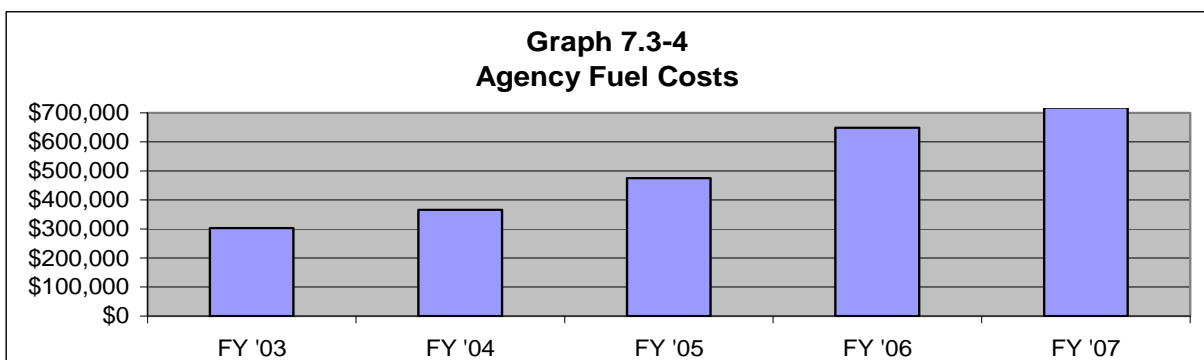


Transaction Processing Time - Based on the tracking of transactions through the system, SCFC processes a vendor's invoice or an employee's travel request in average of 2.5 days. This is under the agency's goal of 3 days from the date received to have a voucher processed and submitted to the Comptroller General's office for payment.

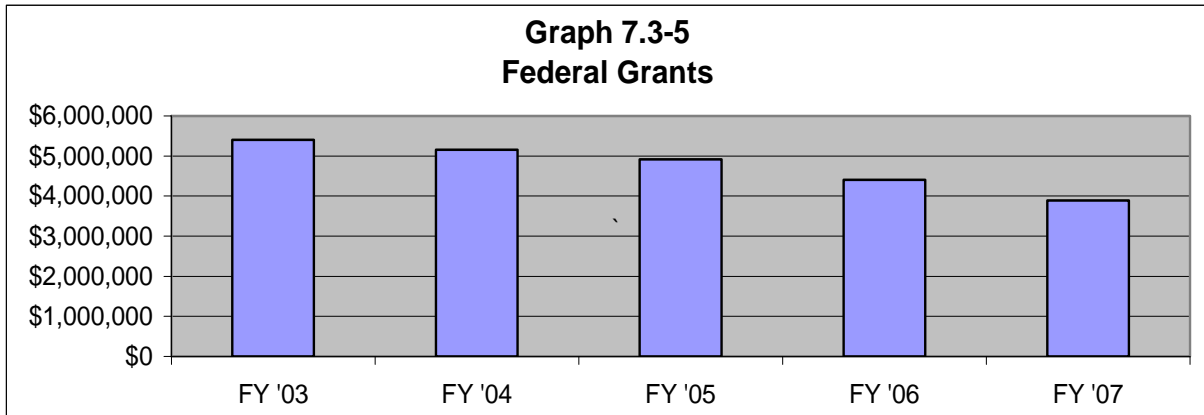
SCFC use of the state procurement card "VISA" resulted in a significant decline and stabilization of the number of voucher transactions processed over the past several years, ultimately reducing the need for 1 FTE. (Graph 7.3-3)



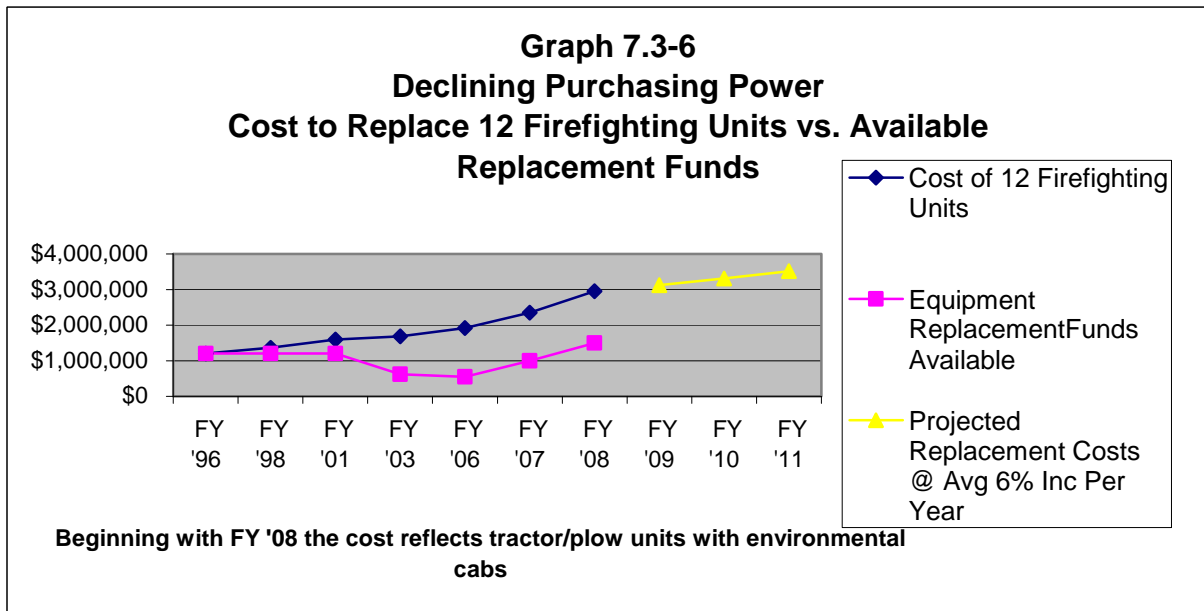
Approximately 40% of regional operating budgets represent fuel costs. With fuel costs having increased over 100% in the past few years (Graph 7.3-4) regional operating budgets continue to be strained.



Operating budgets for protection services now are funded primarily with short-term federal grants and revenue earned from forestry services. Federal grants have been reduced significantly over the past several years (Graph 7.3-5)



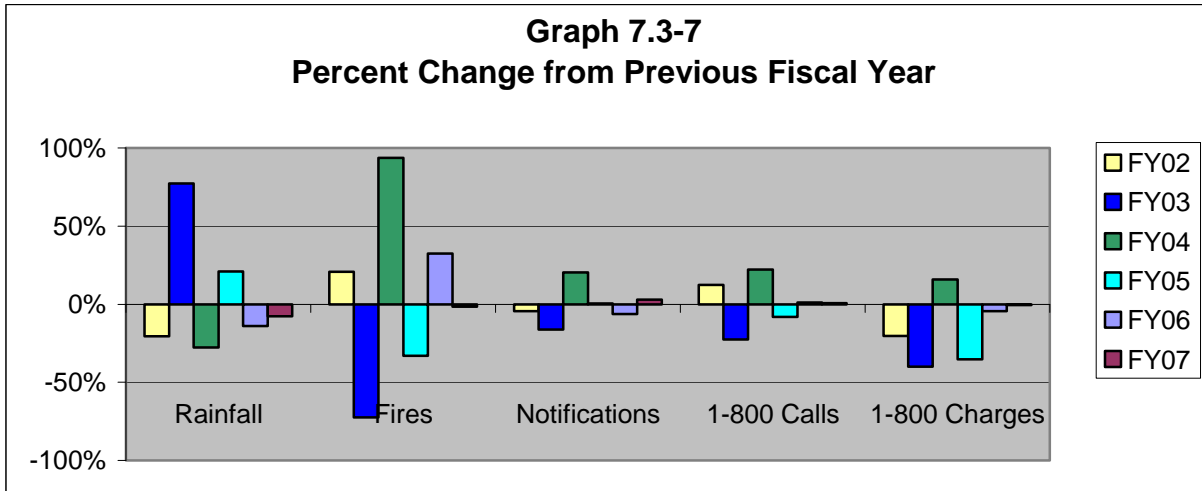
In 1996 the Legislature appropriated funding for a 15 year replacement cycle for firefighting equipment. While the cost of a firefighting unit has increased, the agency's purchasing power for a unit has declined significantly over the past decade. The shortfall for maintaining a 15 year replacement cycle has increased to approximately \$1.5 million. (Graph 7.3-6)



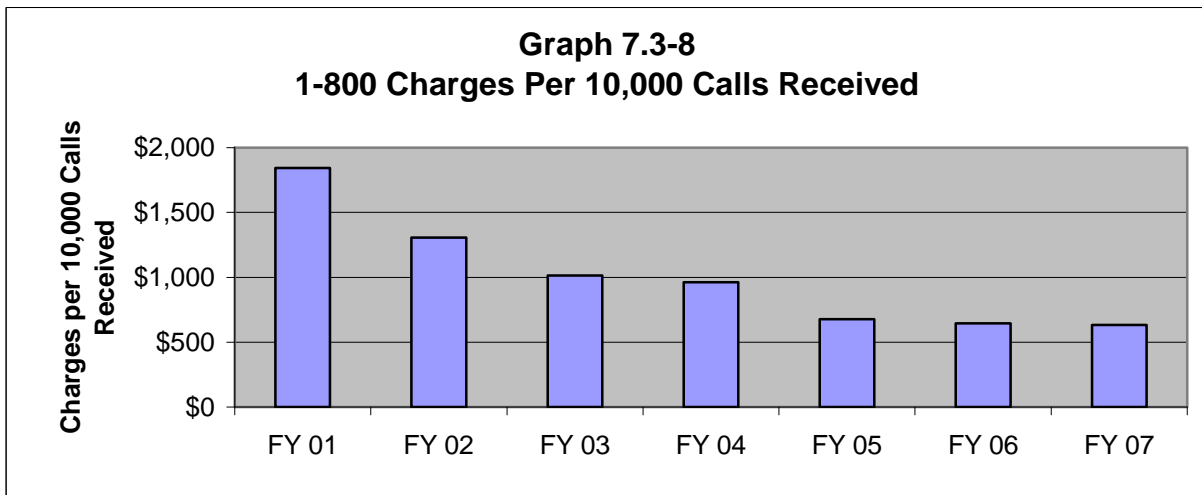
In FY 02, the SCFC began routing all burning notifications, except those for forestry, wildlife and agricultural purposes, to an automated notification system. This greatly improved the efficiency of the SCFC in handling these calls, dispatchers handling other calls, and substantial savings in 1-800 charges. Dispatch managers receive a list each month of 1-800 calls that were 8 minutes or longer to identify opportunities for further cost reduction.

Graph 7.3-7 shows the percent change from the previous fiscal year in the amount of rainfall, number of fires, number of burning notifications, number of 1-800 calls, and charges for those 1-800 calls. A reduction in rainfall normally produces an increase in fires. An increase in notification normally increased 1-800 calls.

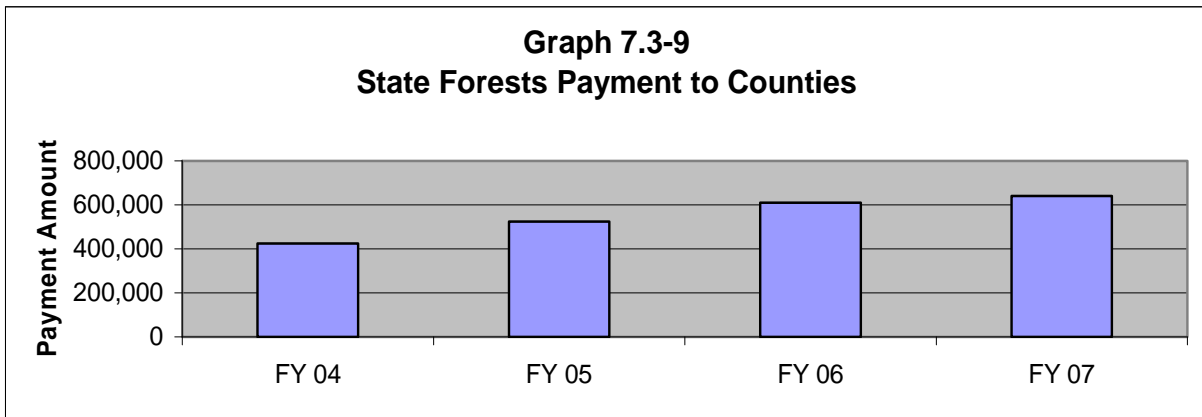
The SCFC was able to achieve a 20 to 40% reduction in annual 1-800 charges since implementing changes in FY 02. In FY 04, rainfall decreased by 28%, fires increased by 94%, and notifications by 20% and 1-800 calls by 22%; but 1-800 charges only increased by 16% compared to the previous year. In FY07, rainfall decreased by 7.5% while fire activity remained about the same compared to the previous year. Even with notifications up slightly, 1-800 charges were about the same as the previous year. This reduction can be attributed to the improved notification processing time seen with the new computer aided dispatch system.



When the SCFC migrated from local fire towers to regional dispatch centers, toll free numbers were established to encourage the public to comply with state laws requiring them to notify the SCFC when burning outdoors. The SCFC handles over 400,000 burning notification calls per year. Graph 7.3-8 shows the trend of improved efficiency and effectiveness in handling large volumes of incoming 1-800 calls with the cost per 10,000 calls received. In FY 02, the SCFC began routing all burning notifications, except those for forestry, wildlife, and agriculture purposes, to an automated notification system. This monitoring call length and new computer aided dispatch software have improved a dispatcher's efficiency and effectiveness in handling calls as well as decreasing costs each fiscal year.



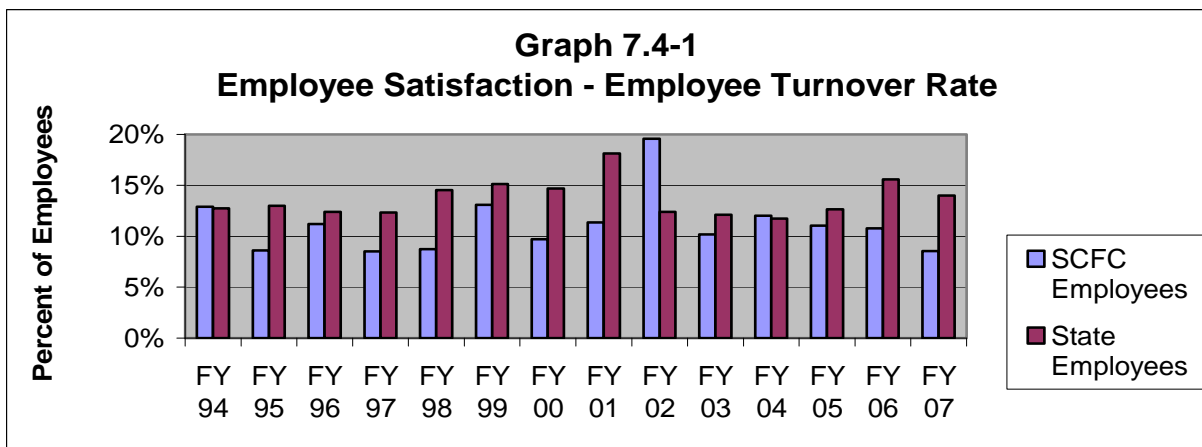
The SCFC is the only state agency that shares revenue produced from state owned lands with the counties where the properties are located. Twenty-five percent of all revenue that the agency receives from use of the land or products sold, such as timber or pine straw, is returned to the county to support local education systems. Based on receipts received during FY 07, over \$600,000 was distributed to eleven counties. Chesterfield and Sumter counties where Sand Hills State Forest and Manchester State Forest are respectively located received the largest payments.



7.4 *What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of Human Resource Results?*

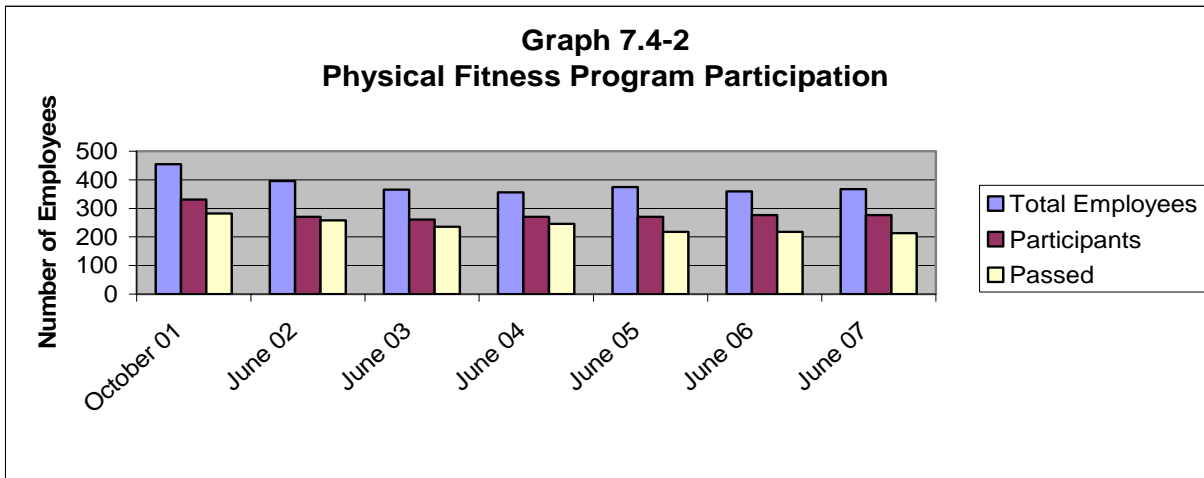
The turnover for the agency is consistently lower than the turnover for all state employees. The agency's turnover for FY 07 is 8.53%. (Graph 7.4-1)

The average state service for all state employees is currently 11.5 years, compared to the average state service for SCFC employees of 13.25 years. We continue to believe this comparison is indicative of our employees enjoying their work and their working environment.



The Southern Group of State Foresters has adopted the moderate level work capacity test (walking 2 miles with a 25-lb. pack in 30 minutes or less) as the standard to measure wildland firefighter physical fitness. Several states have begun implementation of physical fitness programs to reach this goal. The SCFC is involved with this effort.

Participation in the Physical Fitness Program is required for all fireline employees and for those that volunteer to assist with fireline duties. The percentage of employees passing remained fairly constant in 2007 with 78% passing the fitness test.



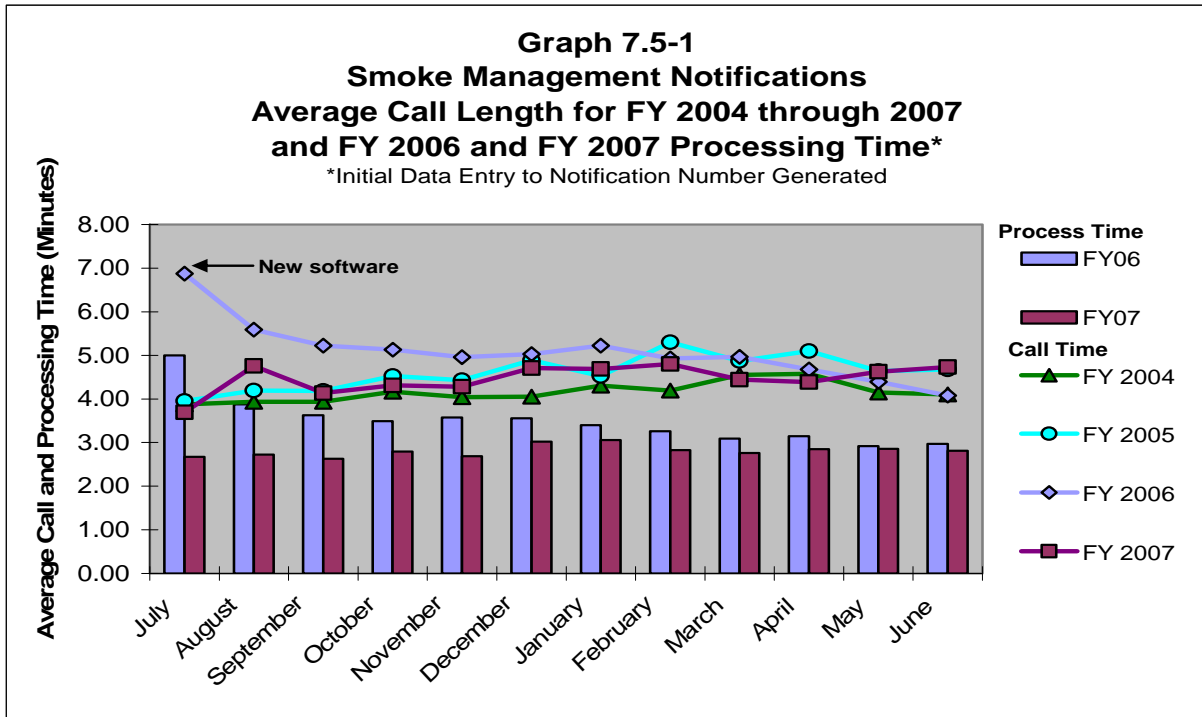
7.5 *What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of regulatory/legal compliance and community support?*

The Agency is subject to financial and compliance audits, cooperative Forest Management Reviews by US Forest Service, Federal Aviation Administration inspections and regulations, State Fleet Management inspections, OSHA regulations, and DHEC Smoke Management Guidelines and Outdoor Burning Regulations. We have audits in the areas of accounting, purchasing, insurance, classification, and compensation. They have all been performed without findings of questioned costs or non compliance over the past several years. Federal funds require compliance with Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The USDA Forest Service monitors compliance on a regular basis.

On July 1, 2005, the SCFC implemented a new computer aided dispatch system based on commercial, “off-the-shelf” E911 software. This allowed the SCFC to utilize technology and functions developed for 911 systems and to control costs over custom developed software. A process unique to the SCFC is determining compliance with DHEC Smoke Management Guidelines when taking burn notifications for forestry, wildlife or agriculture purposes. A module was added to the E911 dispatching software to automate the process of determining compliance with these Smoke Management Guidelines with the intent to reduce processing time and increase the accuracy in applying these regulations with each notification.

Prior to the installation of the new software, the only measure on how long it took to process a Smoke Management notification would require matching up the notification to the 1-800 phone records. Due to differences in phone numbers provided by the caller and the actual phone they were using to place the call, just over 50% could be matched up. With the new software, “timestamps” exist when the first entry to the notification data entry form is made and when a burn notification number is generated. This period is referred to as the “Processing Time”.

Graph 7.5-1 displays the Average Call Length (in minutes) for Smoke Management Notifications that could be matched up to 1-800 phone records for FY 04, through FY 07. This graph also displays the “Processing Time” for FY 06 and FY 07 that is captured by the new software. The FY 06 data shows a typical “learning curve” associated with a new system. Processing Times were longer the first several months but significantly improved. By the end of the first year with the new software, processing times decreased by 30-45 seconds on average compared to FY 05. Continued improvement in processing time was seen in FY07 data.



The number of Smoke Management notifications taken by SCFC dispatch centers varies greatly throughout the year. Graph 7.5-2 demonstrates this wide annual variation showing that the majority of notifications are taken between December and April of each year. Even though call volume increased drastically between December and April, processing times remain consistent. This is an indication of improved efficiencies gained by the new software.

